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Meditations on Wittgenstein's Ethics

By

Brendan Leier

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Department of Philosophy

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 1994

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October 5th, 1994

Acknowledgments
and
Dedication

Philosophical Acknowledgments: I would like to thank Catherine Wilson, Bob Burch, Bruce Hunter, Bernie Linsky, and Jan Zwicky for their help with the development of my thoughts in this thesis.

Personal Acknowledgments: The last two years have been the best and worst of my life. I would like to thank the following people for helping me survive and even prosper. My parents, Susan and Terry Leier. I cannot begin to account for the help and support you have given me throughout the years. Words simply fail me. I love you both very much. My sisters and brother, Allison, Stephanie, and Christopher. I am very proud of you all. My friends, Matt, Cindy, Trevor, Jones, Dan, Heidi, Sarah, Susan, Edrie, Nick, Mike, Pam, Bev, Chris, Sandy, and you who I have forgotten. In the words of Jones, you are necessary conditions for my existence.

Zeitgeist: Bar Teca, Big Rock Brewery, The Black Dog, Douglas Coupland, Details, Deweys, Dr. Martin's, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, The Empty Pocket, St. Joseph's, Harvey Keitel, Krzysztof Kieslowski, Lowest of the Low, Sarah McLachlin, Modal Operators, Bob Probert, Ren and Stimpy, Rheostatics, Henry Rollins, Saskatchewan Roughriders (God's Team), Skydiggers, The Simpsons, Leo Tolstoy, Tradition Guitars, Neil Young.

Dedication: To my Grandparents, Mary Helen Driscoll, Anthony Leier, Catherine Spittle, and Sidney Noyes. No words could teach the lessons your humble lives have shown. God give me the courage to live them as well.

Abstract

Meditations on Wittgenstein's Ethics consists of three distinct perspectives on Wittgenstein's ethical/religious writings.

Chapter 1 compares Wittgenstein's 1929 *Lecture on Ethics* with Heidegger's 1929 address *What is Metaphysics?* in order to demonstrate the similarities between each philosopher's conceptions of language and value. I show that both Wittgenstein's 'picture' theory of meaning and Heidegger's conception of metaphysics are characterized by representational accounts of language. For both philosophers, the representational nature of language serves as a hindrance to the expression of 'value' statements in language. Value is only experienced, then, in the transcendence of language: Wittgenstein's 'world', Heidegger's 'beings as a whole'.

Chapter 2 looks at the influences of Tolstoy and Schopenhauer in section 6 of *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. I argue that, although Wittgenstein uses several of Schopenhauer's metaphors in section 6 of the *Tractatus*, he is forced to abandon Schopenhauer's philosophical positions on ethics and the will due mostly to the influence of Tolstoy's *Gospels in Brief* which he encountered during the first war. I conclude with exegesis of selected parts of section 6 in light of Tolstoy's text.

Chapter 3 looks at the philosophical implications of following ethical rules privately. I argue that in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein can be seen as advocating what I refer to as a 'private ethical life'. I demonstrate the skeptical consequences of following an ethical rule privately using Wittgenstein's own comments regarding rule following found in *Philosophical Investigations*. I conclude by discussing Tolstoy's character Father Sergius as a fictional example of the personal and philosophical implications of private ethical rule following.

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Chapter 1: Transcendence and Fundamental Ontology in Early Heidegger and Wittgenstein

Heidegger and Wittgenstein

It would not seem apparent at first that Martin Heidegger and Ludwig Wittgenstein, the two paradigmatic philosophers of their respective contemporary Continental and Analytic traditions, would share common philosophical problems. It would seem even less apparent that the two would actually adopt similar viewpoints towards these problems. This paper will begin with a single thread of evidence indicating a connection between the two philosophers' works, and attempt to demonstrate that one need not look far into the early works of Heidegger and Wittgenstein to show that profound similarities lie in both philosophers' approaches to fundamental ontology and to the logic and limits of language.

In 1965 the editors of *Philosophical Review* published the manuscript of a popular lecture that Wittgenstein presented to a Cambridge society called the 'Heretics' in 1929. The *Lecture on Ethics*[1] was published accompanied by Freidrich Waismann's notes documenting Wittgenstein's 1929-30 discussions with members of the Vienna Circle, particularly Moritz Schlick. The conversational notes published with the lecture concerned questions raised by that lecture, primarily Wittgenstein's claim that all ethical propositions are inherently non-sensical. The single thread of evidence to which I refer is not something included in these notes, but something *excluded* from the notes by the persons responsible for *Lecture on Ethics*. The version of the notes as published in the 1965 *Philosophical Review* proceeds like this,

> Monday, 30 December, 1929 (at Shlick's).
>
> Man has the urge to thrust against the limits of language. Think for instance about one's astonishment that anything exists. This astonishment...

The account of this same note given by Waismann in his book *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle* begins like this,

> Apropos of Heidegger
>
> Monday, 30 December, 1929 (at Schlick's).
>
> To be sure, I can imagine what Heidegger means by Being and anxiety(angst). Man has the urge to thrust against the limits of language. Think for an instant about one's astonishment that anything exists. This astonishment cannot be expressed in the form of a question and there is

---

[1] The title was provided by the editors; the Wittgenstein manuscript was untitled.

> no answer to it. Anything we can say must, a-priori, be only nonsense. Nevertheless we thrust against the limits of language. Kierkegaard, too, recognized this thrust and even described it much in the same way (as a thrust against paradox). This thrust against the limits of language is *ethics*. I regard it as very important to put an end to all this chatter about ethics- whether there is knowledge in ethics, whether there are values, whether the good can be defined, etc. In ethics, one constantly tries to say something that does not concern and can never concern the essence of the matter. It is a-priori certain that, whatever definition one may give to the Good, it is always a misunderstanding to suppose that the formulation corresponds to what one really means. (Moore). But the tendency, the thrust, *points to something*. [2]

One can only guess at the reasons the persons responsible for publishing *Lecture on Ethics* edited out this one specific line of Wittgenstein and Schlick's conversation, but I will assume that this act of editing also does, in Wittgenstein's words, 'point to something'. It is this seemingly insignificant occurrence that prompted me to search for a 'common ground' in the early thoughts of these two philosophers.

This chapter is by no means meant to be a comprehensive exegesis of the entire works of Heidegger or Wittgenstein, or even a comprehensive comparison of the two realms of thought. I will simply examine the two specific lectures which are related by Waismann's notes to attempt to show that there is a ground for the possibility of comparison of the two philosophers in question. I am also sure that any reader familiar with both the lectures in question will most definitely discover similarities in the two works that have completely escaped my analysis. To such a reader I will give my warmest regards for that is indeed the intended purpose for this chapter. This chapter is written to give a glimpse at the similar streams of thought that run through the philosophies of Heidegger and Wittgenstein. I will simply attempt to point at the more obvious similarities, first, in order that the reader will realize that these similarities actually do exist, and second, that the reader might become interested in pursuing the deeper conceptions that these two philosophers embrace right down to the bedrock, the fundamental questions which concern contemporary philosophy.

The two topics for comparison then, are Wittgenstein's *Lecture on Ethics* and Heidegger's 1929 inaugural address *What is Metaphysics?* which contains the reference to Being and Dread(angst) that Wittgenstein mentioned in his conversation with Schlick. It will be difficult at times to contain the discussion strictly to the two lectures in question, especially with regard to an exegesis or genealogy of basic concepts since both authors' works were popular lectures aimed at audiences with no particular philosophical background. I will frequently elucidate my account of Wittgenstein's early ontology with examples from the *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, seeing that L.E. contains very little explanation

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[2] McGuinness, *Wiener Kreis* pp.68

of Wittgenstein's more technical terminology or discussions of fundamental ontology. A *Postscript* was appended to Heidegger's *What is Metaphysics?* in 1943 and the essay was prefaced by a self contained paper called *The Way Back Into the Ground of Metaphysics* in 1949. I will consider all three of these works, as together they paint a more complete picture of Heidegger's fundamental ontology and characterization of metaphysics. Any digressions or deviations from this path or set of designated readings will be duly noted and corrected as briefly as possible.

Facts, beings, and Representation

The comparison of the works of Heidegger and Wittgenstein has surely not been facilitated by the vocabularies[3] of either thinker. The comprehension of the technical terminology of each thinker is indeed a task in itself. Therefore, a certain amount of exegesis will be necessary to establish some 'common ground' from which we can then begin to compare what I am claiming are, in fact, similar outlooks. An appropriate place to start the exegetical process is with Heidegger's and Wittgenstein's conceptions of language.[4]

Both L.E. and W.I.M. emphasize the importance of language as a communicative device as well as a 'limit' of sorts to the meaningful expression of experience.

> Our words used as we use them in science, are vessels capable only of containing and conveying meaning and sense, *natural* meaning and sense. Ethics, if it is anything, is supernatural and our words will only express facts; as a teacup will only hold a teacup full of water even if I were to pour a gallon over it.[5]

This passage from L.E. follows a theme spelled out in the *Tractatus*, that is, that our language consists of propositions that mirror facts in the world. Our propositions can have 'sense' provided that they share a logical form with 'states of affairs' in the world('states of affairs' being the constituents of 'facts', 'facts' being the sensory correspondents of 'propositions' in a language). Our language becomes sense-less or non-sensical when the propositions we utter have no corresponding logical form in the world of potential facts. "A proposition

---

3 I do not intend to say here that the specificity and subsequent difficulty of either philosopher's vocabulary is superfluous or unnecessary as each tries to distinguish his own though from the presuppositions of traditional philosophical vocabulary. Indeed, it is the realization of both philosophers that some linguistic distinction must be adopted in order to turn the reader from traditional ontology, which is provocatively similar in both philosophers' cases.

4 In regards to Wittgenstein, I will present a strictly Tractarian critique of language and the limits of language. This critique may be slightly dated as of 1929 but it is my opinion that Wittgenstein still firmly embraced the conception of 'representation as reality' or the 'picture' theory of language at the time he authored 'Lecture on Ethics'.

5 *Lecture* pp.40

can be true or false only in virtue of being a picture of reality".[6] So ethical propositions according to Wittgenstein are not false but non-sensical. This is not in any way a denial of the importance of ethical considerations in one's life but instead the assertion that our language, by definition, is an inadequate instrument for the expression or discussion of ethical experience.

What is of first importance to my thesis is that Heidegger sees the discussion of ethics and indeed of all value theory as running into a similar dilemma: like Wittgenstein, Heidegger does not deny the validity of ethical experience, and also like Wittgenstein, he takes the account of this experience to have been corrupted by the representation necessitated by the logic that underlies contemporary metaphysical thought.

> Every valuing, even when it values positively, is a subjectivizing. It does not let beings: be. Rather, valuing lets beings: be valid-solely as the objects of its doing. This bizarre effort to prove the objectivity of values does not know what it is doing. When one proclaims "God" the altogether "highest value", this is a degradation of God's essence. Here as elsewhere thinking in values is the greatest blasphemy imaginable against Being.[7]

This value thinking, for Heidegger, results from the representational aspect of thought found at the very foundation of contemporary metaphysics. In fact, Heidegger's characterization of metaphysics found in W.I.M.[8] has as its base metaphysics attempting to represent beings as beings, or in other words, to give an account of the essence of things in themselves, to pry into the very heart of things, to gain insight into their thing-ness.

> Modern science neither serves the purpose originally intrusted to it, nor does it seek the truth in itself....Every relationship to what-is thus bears witness to a knowledge of Being, but at the same time to its own inability by and of itself to authenticate the truth of this knowledge. This truth is merely the truth of what-is. Metaphysics is the history of this truth. It tells us what-is is by conceptualizing the 'is-ness' of what-is. [9]

We see further evidence of this characterization,

> Because metaphysics inquires about beings as beings, it remains concerned with beings and does not devote itself to Being as Being[10]

---

6 *Tractatus* 4.06

7 Heidegger, *'Letter on Humanism'* from *Basic Writings* pg.228

8 Unless I am quoting a specific passage from *What is Metaphysics*, take W.I.M. to mean the collection of the three distinct works.

9 *Postscript* pp.258

10 *Ground of Metaphysics* pp.266

I take these passages to show, that Heidegger and Wittgenstein had come, in 1929, to very similar conclusions about language, logic, what can be said, and what cannot. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein attempts to give a strict account of the limits of language in terms of meaningful propositions representing states of affairs in reality. The ontology of the Tractarian account consists of ideal linguistic elements, names, elementary propositions, propositions, as well as elements of perception, objects, states of affairs, and facts. With these linguistic and perceptual building blocks, Wittgenstein formulated the picture theory of meaning. For any particular combination of facts, there exists a corresponding set of linguistic propositions. For a set of propositions to be true, the corresponding set of facts must exist in the world, or be true also. The facts corresponding to 'I am typing this paper now' are true as I write this sentence because the state of affairs(facts) which corresponds to 'I am typing this paper now' is(are) actual. As you read this, the proposition 'I am typing this paper now' retains the pictoral form of what was the true(actual) fact: hence, the sentence makes sense(because it has the requisite logico-pictorial form) but indeed is not true because there is no actual event now corresponding with the picture(state of affairs, facts) of the proposition 'I am typing this paper now'.

So for Wittgenstein, there exist two types of facts that correspond to meaningful propositions. True and false facts are true and false in terms of their correspondence with actuality. Both are meaningful, however, because they both have corresponding ideal pictorial representations. That they are meaningful says it is logically possible that a state of affairs could correspond to them.

There is a third category of propositions that distinguishes itself from those with corresponding pictorial representations. This category Wittgenstein refers to as non-sensical. A non-sensical proposition has no sense because it simply does not picture any state of affairs at all. Without this mental representation, or picture, the proposition is void of reference and therefore meaning. It can serve no function other than to confuse or mislead philosophers, psychologists, or speakers of ordinary language.

> Most of the propositions and questions to be found in philosophical works are not false but non-sensical. Consequently, we can not give any answer to questions of this kind, but can only point out that they are non-sensical. Most of the propositions and questions of philosophers arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language. (They belong to the same class as the question whether the good is more or less identical than the beautiful.) And it is surprising that the deepest problems are in fact not problems at all.[11]

One of the fundamental purposes of the *Tractatus*, then, is to provide a means to show that certain propositions are neither true or false, but

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11 *Tractatus* 4.003

meaningless or non-sensical. Using this method, Wittgenstein intends to clearly define the limits of meaningful philosophical discourse to include only those propositions that have corresponding or possibly corresponding representations(states of affairs).

If the thought of Heidegger's philosophy is not conjured up by this brief overview of the Tractarian picture of language and meaning this should come as no surprise. Nowhere does Heidegger discuss states of affairs, facts, or other ideal Wittgensteinian building blocks of representation. What Heidegger does provide us with, however, is a critique of the limits of language as it is used in contemporary metaphysics. Notice particularly Heidegger's account of the limitations of metaphysics in his interpretation, especially the source of these limitations, the conception of 'rationality as representation'[12].

> Metaphysics does not ask this question because it thinks of Being only by representing beings as beings.[13]
>
> Metaphysics, insofar as it always represents only beings as beings, does not recall Being itself.[14]
>
> Due to the manner in which it thinks of beings, metaphysics almost seems to be, without knowing it, the barrier which keeps man from the original involvement of Being in human nature.[15]

As we see in the passages above, Heidegger's critique of metaphysics, and thus of metaphysical language, works around the notion that the essence of contemporary metaphysics is the attempt to represent beings as beings. It is an attempt to, "make them [beings] objects of investigation and determine their grounds"[16] and to represent beings essentially in language. In this sense, Heidegger's definition of the essence of metaphysics and Wittgenstein's critique of language in the *Tractatus* can be seen as provocatively similar insofar as they both have at their heart the conception of language being meaningful inasmuch as it represents 'facts' or 'beings' i.e. objects of experience or things in the world.

If we were to replace Heidegger's notion of 'being' or 'beings in themselves' with Wittgenstein's notion of 'states of affairs', we can interpret, in a Heideggerian sense, the *Tractatus* as being one of the most creative, intensive attempts at fulfilling, and thus ending, the metaphysical project as Heidegger

---

12 I first encountered the term 'rationality as representation' in James Edwards' book *Ethics Without Philosophy*. It is a term Edwards, and I, will use to characterize Wittgenstein's notion of meaning being derived from the correspondance of atomic linguistic entities(names) and atomic 'wordly' entities(objects). Propositions in a language then 'represent' a logical picture of the world(facts). Hence, 'rationality as representation'.

13 *Ground of Metaphysics* pp.268 My emphasis on 'representing'.

14 *Ground of Metaphysics* pp.266

15 *Ground of Metaphysics* pp.269

16 *Ground of Metaphysics* pp.269

characterizes it.[17] Wittgenstein's criteria for meaningful discourse, i.e. the ability to represent states of affairs or 'the way the world is' in linguistic propositions, can be understood to be one of the most paradigmatic attempts of traditional metaphysics in terms of Heidegger's characterization of this term. For the purposes of clarity, we will adopt Heidegger's definition of metaphysics we have found to be embraced essentially in Wittgenstein's work, that being, the development of an ontology in which rationality is portrayed as the ability to represent 'beings' or 'facts'. Propositions, then, are either true or false insofar as they accord with our representations of actual facts(beings)[18], sensical or non-sensical if they share the logical-pictorial form of possible facts(beings). For Heidegger, this is the essential nature and necessary limit of metaphysical inquiry.

For both Heidegger and Wittgenstein the conception of representation as being the paradigm of metaphysics and rationality resulted in each thinker's turn away from the representational model as the means to express thought about value or ethical experience in life. For Heidegger, metaphysics was to be transcended in the sense that language and thought must be purged of the snares of traditional ontology, and a new ontology, one which is open to the experience of Being, realized. For Wittgenstein, silence was the answer to experience which could not formally be represented. The important conclusion to draw from each philosophers' characterization of representational rationality is that this form of thought has necessary limits. In each philosopher's opinion, human experience could not be fully and discursively accounted for within the realm of language dominated by logic, representation, and essential thinking.

The question now is, is it possible meaningfully to conceive of value or ethics, or are these subjects simply extra-linguistic or non-existent? For both philosophers, metaphysical discourse is incapable of portraying any sense of value or meaning. As we will soon discover, both Heidegger and Wittgenstein hold that ethical experience, though not essentially represented by language, is actual and present in life. They both also give accounts of the manifestation of such experience in life which are strikingly similar, hence the need to explicate some of the darker corners of both thinker's work.

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[17] Because I take 'states of affairs' or 'facts' and 'beings' both to be entities representing things in the world, I believe that they can be considered in most ordinary cases to be synonymous. A less charitable allowance may point out that Heidegger's opinion of what counts for 'beings' might be more inclusive than positivistic Wittgensteinian criteria of what a 'fact' exactly **is** . This issue, although interesting, does not warrant further discussion here. My claim in this paper is that Heidegger's and Wittgenstein's ontologies and views of language are provocatively similar, not identical. The notion that 'state of affairs' and 'beings' are completely congruent is not essential to my thesis. It is the case that any variance in synonymy would occur in extra-ordinary cases which do not in any way undermine my thesis.

[18] To metaphysics the nature of truth always appears only in the derivative form of the truth of knowledge and in the truth of propositions which formulate our knowledge. W.G.M. pg.268 See also *Wom Wesen der Warheit*

Something? Nothing?

Now it has been suggested[19] that any discussion of Heidegger and Wittgenstein's views on ethics or values lacks a necessary common ground. This opinion arises in the misconception of Wittgenstein as simply reiterating a Humean affirmation of the fact/value distinction, while taking(correctly) Heidegger to be rejecting this distinction as a throwback to traditional ontology. It is indeed true that Wittgenstein repeatedly asserts that any notion of absolute value cannot be expressed or understood as existing inherently in facts.

> The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does happen: *in* it no value exists-and if it did exist, it would have no value.[20]

However, it is not Wittgenstein's intention to dismiss the notion of value as a psychological epiphenomenon.

> Now perhaps some of you would agree to that and be reminded of Hamlet's words "Nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." What Hamlet says seems to imply that good and bad, though not qualities of the world outside us, are attributes to our state of mind. But what I mean is that a state of mind, so far as we mean by that a fact which we can describe, is in no ethical sense good or bad.[21]

Nor does he wish to dismiss the notion of absolute value altogether,

> Ethics so far as it springs from the desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life, the absolute good, the absolute value can be no science. What is says does not add to our knowledge in any sense. But it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help respecting deeply and I would not for my life ridicule it.[22]

Wittgenstein simply denies the possibility of a dialogue about value that is not inherently, at its roots, non-sensical.

Similarly, as we have seen in a previous passage, Heidegger claims that traditional 'value-thinking', is "the greatest blasphemy imaginable against Being." I suggest that Wittgenstein is no more buying into the traditional fact/value distinction than Heidegger can be seen to. Clearly neither are. Wittgenstein and Heidegger are both denying the possibility of the claims of value theory based on traditional metaphysics while at the same time being careful to leave

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19 By Michael Murray, editor of *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy* pg.83 As well, Robert Burch has brought this to my attention in our discussions.

20 *Tractatus* 6.41

21 *Lecture* pp.39

22 *Lecture* pp.44

open the possibility of value itself. It is now clear that we have a common ground to discuss the possibility of value and indeed this discussion will show that both philosophers will take a similar transcendental turn to explain the source of ethical experience.

Perhaps the most obvious similarity between *What is Metaphysics* and *Lecture on Ethics* is the characterization of an experience that seems to transcend the representational structure of the logic of language. For both Wittgenstein and Heidegger, this experience is hinted at in the form of a question.

> I will describe this experience in order, if possible, to make you recall the same or similar experiences, so that we may have a common ground for our investigation. I believe the best way of describing it is to say that when I have it *I wonder at the existence of the world.* And I am then inclined to use such phrases as "how extraordinary that anything should exist" or "how extraordinary that the world should exist".[23]

The conclusion of *What is Metaphysics*? relates to us a similar sense of wonder,

> For this insertion it is of decisive importance, first, that we allow space for beings as a whole; second, that we release ourselves into the nothing, which is to say, that we liberate ourselves from those idols everyone has and to which he is wont to go cringing; and finally, that we let the sweep of our suspense take its full course, so that it swings back into the basic question of metaphysics which the nothing itself compels: Why are there beings at all, and why not rather nothing?[24]

My interest in the similarity of these two particular passages does not lie in the specific question asked. The question 'Why is there something rather than nothing?' is not particularly unique to either thinker, and the fact that they both mention or refer to it is, for our purposes here, only trivially interesting. The interesting similarity is the transcendental turn in both Heidegger and Wittgenstein's thought that allows them to arrive, in 1929, at this specific question. Fortunately, both thinkers clearly spell out the conditions for the possibility of this question's being asked in terms of their respective ontologies. This is fertile ground for our investigation to continue.

Ethics and the Limits of Language

In the paragraphs following his attempt at explaining his 'wonder at the existence world', Wittgenstein attempts to examine what this question could possibly mean.

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23 *Lecture* pp.41
24 *What is Metaphysics?* pp.112

> But it is nonsense to say that I wonder at the existence of the world, because I cannot imagine it not existing. I could of course wonder at the world round me being as it is. If for instance I had this experience while looking into the blue sky, I could wonder at the sky being blue as opposed to the case when it's clouded. But that's not what I mean. I am wondering at the sky being *whatever it is*. [25]

Wittgenstein concludes his questioning by saying that he is essentially questioning a paradox, and that this paradoxical language runs through all ethical and religious language. Language, therefore, is an insufficient means to portray this ethical experience. So is this the final attempt to characterize ethical experience? Indeed not. If we look back to the *Tractatus*, we see Wittgenstein again struggling with the possible meaning of this experience. In 6.44 Wittgenstein writes "It is not *how* things are in the world that is mystical, but *that* it exists." The *Tractarian* account of this experience is different from that in LE in one important and interesting way. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein attempts to incorporate this experience with the fundamental ontology he has constructed. His efforts, as we will see, are most provocative and interesting. The attempt to provide a richer account of the manifestation of ethical experience will show us just how close Wittgenstein and Heidegger come to pass in their transcendental viewpoints.

In his attempt to reconcile the notions of value[26] or ethics with the strict criteria for sensical propositions in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein develops the idea of a metaphysical self which is the at the same time the limit and the perceiver of the world[27]. As we recall, the world of facts cannot contain value, i.e. facts in and of themselves are valueless, therefore if there is value, it must lie outside the world. Wittgenstein posits the metaphysical self[28] as also being outside the world; he uses the analogy of the eye and the visual field to make this point clearer. Just as the eye lies outside the visual field so does the metaphysical self lie outside the world of facts.

> Where in the world is the metaphysical subject to be found? You will say this is exactly like the case of the eye and the visual field. But really you

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25 *Lecture* pp.41-2

26 When I refer to ethics, value, meaning, etc. I use the terms as loosely as Wittgenstein in *Lecture* "Now instead of saying 'Ethics is the inquiry into what is good' I could have said Ethics is the inquiry into what is valuable, or, into what is really important, or I could have said Ethics is the inquiry into the meaning of life, or into what makes life worth living, or into the right way of living. I believe if you look at all these phrases you will get a rough idea as to what it is that Ethics is concerned with.

27 Taken to mean Wittgenstein's formal World i.e. The combination of true facts.

28 This metaphysical self shares many of the characteristics of da-sein although this is not a detailed enough discussion to present a strong argument for that case at this time.

> do *not* see the eye. And nothing *in the visual field* allows you to infer that it is seen by an eye.[29]

Wittgenstein sees discourse about ethics being fundamentally confused and thus non-sensical due to one fundamental mistake. That mistake is the presupposition that value is inherent in the world, i.e.the notion that facts have value. It is this thinking that leaves ethical language constantly spinning its wheels and thrusting at paradox. The view of the self as being inside the world also leaves an individual with this perception as essentially unhappy.

So Wittgenstein is now left to give an alternative account of the possibility of ethical experience for the individual. The basis of Wittgenstein's account lies within the very nature of the metaphysical self. The metaphysical self lies outside the world and thus transcends the world. The solution to the problem of ethical experience is overcome by the realization that there is no solution to the problem, the problem must be transcended. Thus Wittgenstein claims,

> The solution to the problem of life is seen in the vanishing of the problem.[30]

To solve the problems of ethical experience, meaning, value, etc. we must in a sense take a step back as we are allowed to by the very transcendent nature of the metaphysical self. We subsequently see the world of facts from outside the world of facts. It is only then, as we see the world from outside the world, as we see the world 'as a limited whole', we experience the meaningfulness of life which is absent in the world itself.

> To view the world sub specie aterni is to view it as a whole-a limited whole. Feeling the world as a limited whole-it is this that is mystical.[31]

It is this stepping back, this re-gestalting, that allows the manifestation of ethical experience. This experience, however, is not an experience of some 'thing' or fact, for our perspective has transcended the world, it is the experience of transcendence, the experience of nothing.

> (Is this not the reason why those who have found after a long period of doubt that the sense of life became clear to them have then been unable to say what constituted that sense?)[32]

It is interesting to note that Wittgenstein sees this transcendent turn as an event in life which arises out of 'a long period of doubt'[33] or even, perhaps, anxiety. It

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29 *Tractatus* 5.633
30 *Tractatus* 6.521
31 *Tractatus* 6.45
32 *Tractatus* 6.521

is also interesting to note that Wittgenstein recognizes the limitations of 'rationality as representation' in terms of the possibility of having experience that defies/transcends representation.

> There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest.* They are what is mystical.[34]

So the experience of value that leads to Wittgenstein 'wondering at the existence of the world' results from adopting a transcendental perspective. This attunement towards the world seen as 'a limited whole' makes possible the manifestation of value and meaning. This 'feeling' for Wittgenstein is ineffable; in light of its very nature, it defies description.

> Now when this [the proposition that ethical experience is a fact like any other] is urged against me I at once see clearly, as if it were in a flash of light, not only that no description that I could think of would do to describe what I mean by absolute value, but that I would reject every significant description that anybody could possibly suggest, ab initio, on the grounds of its significance. That is to say: I see now that these nonsensical expressions were not nonsensical because I had not yet found the correct expressions, but that their nonsensicality was their very essence. For all I wanted to do with them was just to go beyond the world and that is to say beyond significant language.[35]

The 'transcendental turn' in the *Tractatus* has been long underplayed by traditional commentators partly due to the cryptic nature of the remarks and partly due to a predominant view that the *Tractatus* is a positivistic treatise about language. As we have seen, however, it is an essential turn that Wittgenstein must take to give some account of ethical experience and meaning in life. As we shall soon see, Heidegger takes a similar turn to transcend traditional metaphysics and the limits of representational thought.

Now we turn to Heidegger's question, "Why are there beings at all, and why not rather nothing?". Prima facie, it would seem that the stream of thought given expression in W.I.M. which underlies this question is in few ways similar to the thoughts which brought about Wittgenstein's "wondering at the existence of the world". After all, we have just shown that the driving force behind Wittgenstein's question is the attempt to give expression to experience that, by definition, defies representation. It seems Heidegger's concern in W.I.M. is to give an account of the ground of the possibility of perceiving beings as well as the act of negation. Nowhere does Heidegger contemplate value or meaning, at least not explicitly. So wherein does the similarity lie?

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[33] Here Wittgenstein is probably refering to Tolstoy's account of his religious conversion, and perhaps even recalling his own dark spiritual anxiety during W.W.1.

[34] *Tractatus* 6.522

[35] *Lecture* pp.44

If we think back to the passages from *Letter on Humanism* which we previously considered, we recall Heidegger's remarks about value thinking or thinking in terms of values. Heidegger does not speak against 'value' per se, but warns against a language which corrupts the Being of beings by submitting them as "only an object[s] for man's estimation".[36] Heidegger calls for a more original thinking about value which transcends the objectification or representation of beings,

> To think against values therefore does not mean to beat the drum for the valuelessness and nullity of beings. It means rather to bring the lighting of the truth of Being before thinking, as against subjectivizing beings into mere objects.[37]

So the true experience of value is realized not in the understanding of beings as objects or representations, but in the light of Being. But what exactly does this entail? Up to this point we only have indications of what it necessarily not entail, i.e. representative thinking, insistent thinking about beings as such, calculative - vs- meditative thinking. Unfortunately, Heidegger is less clear about this 'new' thought, thought in 'the truth of Being'. We are reminded at the end of *Postscript* to W.I.M. of the close relationship between language which transcends representation (poetry), and the philosophers attempt to think of Being.

> Out of long guarded speechlessness and the careful clarification of the field thus cleared, comes the utterance of the thinker. Of like origin is the naming of the poet. But since like is only alike insofar as difference allows, and since poetry and thinking are most purely alike in their care of the word, the two things are at the same time at opposite poles in their essence. The thinker utters Being. The poet names what is holy.[38]

In a very strong sense, then, to think the Being of beings, to think of the transcendence of the ensemble of beings, is indeed to think in the realm of truth, to think in the realm of value, to think in the realm of meaning. Although Heidegger seldom names the experience of Being in W.I.M. as one of transcendence, it can, and most properly must, definitely be described as one. Thus, as we have suggested what it might be for Heidegger to think meaning or value, our task is to determine if the contents of W.I.M. do provide us with a description of such a process.

Heidegger's account of transcendence stems from the close examination of the manifestation of a particular feeling. The genuine occurrence or manifestation of this feeling in human experience, according to Heidegger, is extremely rare although its sense is often mentioned and understood. The

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36 *Letter on Humanism* pp.228
37 ibid.
38 *Postscript* pp.264

English translations of 'angst', dread or anxiety, cannot seem to capture the essence of the term. Angst(unlike fear) is not experienced in terms of some object, some thing. Indeed, angst comes from fear or dread of no thing in particular. The absence of an object of this angst allows for all objects/beings to 'fade' in a sense, as if da-sein were being slowly pulled away from the world-the ensemble of beings. This 'slipping away' from particular objects, beings, results in the revelation of what Heidegger refers to as the 'nothing'.

> The receding of beings as a whole that closes in on us in anxiety oppresses us. We can get no hold on things. In the slipping away of beings only this "no hold on things" comes over us and remains.[39]

As the totality of beings is transcended, da-sein is left speechless in a sense, held out into the nothing where nothing is to be spoken of. Da-sein is left speechless, robbed of all things/beings to refer to.

> Angst robs us of speech. Because beings as a whole slip away, so that just the nothing crowds round, in the face of angst all utterance of the "is" falls silent.[40]

The experience of pulling away from beings, this transcendence, gives da-sein a glimpse into the essence of not beings, but Being.

> But Being is not an existing quality of what-is, nor, unlike what-is, can Being be conceived and established objectively. This, the purely 'Other' than everything that 'is' , is that-which-is-not (das Nicht-Seinde).[41]

> The clear courage for essential angst guarantees that most mysterious of all possibilities: the experience of Being.[42]

As da-sein experiences the essence of the nothing, and subsequently of Being, it as well dwells in the realm of value, the realm of truth and meaning. This is the experience that calls for the transcendence of metaphysics, of representational rationality. Unlike Wittgenstein's call for silence at the realization of the limits of language, Heidegger calls for the transcendence of a language whose limit in the attunement to Being has been reached.

> The thinking which is posited by beings as such, and therefore representational and illuminating in that way, must be supplanted by a

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39 *What is Metaphysics?* pp.102
40 ibid.
41 *Postscript* pp. 260
42 *Postscript* pp. 261

> different kind of thinking which is brought to pass by Being itself and, therefore, responsive to Being.[43]

This brief sketch of Heidegger's account of transcendence in W.I.M. enables us to now contrast this account with Wittgenstein's to see how each paints a strikingly similar portrait of the character, the limits, and the transcendence of language.

Conclusion

As we have seen in a relatively cursory examination, for two philosophers whose names are seldom uttered in the same sentence, Heidegger and Wittgenstein share provocatively similar pictures of the limits of representational ontologies. Wittgenstein sees representational thought as being the limit of meaningful linguistic discourse. The sense/non-sense distinction stems from a linguistic proposition's ability to mirror the logical form of a picture or a state of affairs. Any proposition which has no corresponding picture is essentially non-sensical. Therefore the ideal protocol of the philosopher is,

> ...to say nothing except what can be said, i.e. propositions of natural science-i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy-and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he has failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions. Although it would not be satisfying to the other person-he would not have the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy-this method would be the only strictly correct one.[44]

Although traditional interpreters of the *Tractatus* would want to deny this, Wittgenstein realizes the limits of representational philosophy in its attempt to account for meaning and value in the world. He does not dismiss the reality or importance of these experiences, but urges the reader to adopt a transcendental viewpoint, to realize that the manifestation of ethical experience is existential in nature, that it accommodated by the adoption of a transcendental attitude or point of view, not by philosophical musings. Wittgenstein does not limit human experience within the constraints of philosophy, he defines meaningful philosophical discourse as a subset of possible human experience.

Heidegger in turn also sees representation as the essence of metaphysical thought. Metaphysics has focused its efforts on representing beings as beings and in this effort, has been blind to the Being of beings. The effort to represent beings as beings has in and of itself served as the hindrance of da-sein's openness to the experience of Being. The necessary objectification essential to metaphysical thought fails to portray Being in its truest sense.

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43 *Ground of Metaphysics* pp.270
44 *Tractatus* 6.54

> Due to the manner in which it thinks of beings, metaphysics almost seems to be, without knowing it, the barrier which keeps man from the original involvement in Being in human nature.[45]

Heidegger, along with Wittgenstein, realizes the strict limitations of 'rationality as representation' in terms of accounting for meaning or value in experience. Unlike Wittgenstein, however, Heidegger does not believe that the experience of Being is necessarily ineffable. Hence Heidegger's attempt to loosen the grip of representation in our language and 'poetically go forth' in search of the Being of beings, the experience of truth, meaning, and value.

A more profound similarity in Heidegger's and Wittgenstein's respective accounts is the description of the experience of the transcendence of the world of facts or beings. Wittgenstein gives an account of the possibility of the manifestation of ethical experience. The metaphysical self lies outside the world of facts as the eye lies outside the visual field. Value and meaning also lie outside this 'visual field'. The self of the unhappy man is one that constantly searches for meaning within the world. The self's perspective from inside the world is confronted by the problem of the possibility of meaning and value. This problem is solved through actively stepping back, seeing the world 'as a limited whole'. Exercising the very nature of the metaphysical self, transcendent from the world of facts, the problem of meaning is not solved, but disappears. The world of the unhappy man becomes the world of the happy man in the transcendental turn, in seeing the world from outside the world. The experience of absolute value and meaning now becomes manifest as the world is seen aright.

If we compare this experience of transcendence with the one Heidegger describes in W.I.M. we see striking similarities. First, the experience being very rare and coming, for Heidegger, in times of 'angst', for Wittgenstein, in 'long period[s] of doubt'[46]. The transcendent experience itself being described as being before the world as a whole, in the sense that one(da-sein, metaphysical self) is not included with it.

> Feeling the world as a limited whole--it is this that is mystical.[47]

> Being held out into the nothing--as da-sein is--on the ground of concealed anxiety is its surpassing of beings as a whole. It is transcendence.[48]

It is the experience of transcendence itself which is most interesting. As the metaphysical self, da-sein, slips away from the world of facts, from beings, it is also robbed of speech in the şense that there is no object, no-thing to speak about. For Wittgenstein this calls for silence, for Heidegger, poetry. In

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45 *Ground of Metaphysics* pp.269
46 *Tractatus* 6.521
47 *Tractatus* 6.45
48 *What is Metaphysics?* pp.108

transcendence for both, however, there is a pure sense of rightness or correctness, of truth[49] and meaning. The experience of the nothing for Heidegger and Wittgenstein serves to establish a perspective. It is a perspective where the limits of language are not the limits of experience. It is a perspective where we realize that there is something, some no-thing that is essential to our experience of the world. It is the realization that da-sein's, the metaphysical self's, ability to transcend the world is also the ability to experience absolute value, meaning and truth.

There is no conclusion per se to this paper. My intention was simply to present examples of Heidegger and Wittgenstein's works side by side to allow the reader an often unconsidered perspective. If the similarities appear evident or even striking then I will be satisfied with my effort. As I mentioned at the start of the paper, my exegesis of either philosopher's work was not meant to be in any way complete or comprehensive, and it would indeed please me to know that there exist similarities that I might have overlooked or failed to mention. It is my sincere hope that this paper might serve as a starting point for a more careful comparison of the works of these two great thinkers, and that these works might be seen as a bridge of thoughtfulness built between two traditions.

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[49] It is interesting to note that Heidegger's most profound conception of truth in *Vom Wesen der Warheit*, dis-closedness or unconcealment, is characterized as 'mystery' or mysterious. Wittgenstein describes 'things we cannot talk about' in T.L.P. 6.522 as mystical.

Chapter 2: Genealogy of Silence: The Influence of Tolstoy and Schopenhauer in Section 6.0 of the Tractatus

Unpaid Debts

Contrary to the impression that Ludwig Wittgenstein sometimes gives us, the ideas of *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* are the natural extensions of the works of other thinkers who preceded Wittgenstein. In his investigations into the nature of logic and language, Wittgenstein is not at all apprehensive about giving credit where credit is due, Russell and Frege are mentioned throughout the *Tractatus* and given special mention in the preface,

> I will only mention that to the great works of Frege and the writings of my friend Bertrand Russell I owe in large measure the stimulation of my thoughts.[1]

Reading Wittgenstein in the context of Russell and Frege makes the interpretation of the short paragraphs of the *Tractatus* that much easier because it is so often necessary to 'read between the lines'. To have a meaningful background facilitates and often makes possible the interpretation or even comprehension of the most difficult passages.

There is a difficulty, however, in attempting to understand the *Tractatus* exclusively as a response to Frege and Russell. In the latter three sections, particularly section 6, Wittgenstein's remarks shift from discussions of logic and language to the nature of ethics and value. The latter topics seem to have little or no relation to the previous writings on truth, reference, and atomicity of Frege and Russell, and do not speak specifically to the problems addressed in the first sections of the *Tractatus*. Janik and Toulmin's 1973 book *Wittgenstein's Vienna* was the first in a long line of secondary literature to remind us that even though the content of the *Tractatus* primarily concerns logic and language, the main point is something completely different. In this much quoted passage, Wittgenstein describes his intentions to a potential publisher of the *Tractatus*,

> The book's point is an ethical one. I once meant to include in the preface a sentence which is not in fact there now but which I will write out for you here, because it will perhaps be a key to my work for you. What I meant to write then, was this: My work consists of two parts; the one presented here plus all that I have not written. And it is precisely the second part which is the important one. My book draws limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside as it were, and I am convinced that it is the only rigorous way of drawing these limits. In short, I believe that where many others today are just gassing, I have managed in my book to put

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[1] Tractatus, preface.

> everything firmly in place by being silent about it...I would recommend you read the preface and the conclusion, because they contain the most direct expression of the point of the book.[2]

This leaves us with an interesting question. If Frege and Russell were responsible for stimulating Wittgenstein's thoughts on logic and language, what was the genealogy of his ethical[3] writings? Unfortunately, there is no definitive answer to this question. Even from his first recorded efforts at putting his philosophical thoughts down on paper, Wittgenstein intentionally avoided facilitating others understanding his work 'in terms' of someone else's. In the preface to the *Tractatus,* Wittgenstein addresses this aspect of his prose in a determinedly unapologetic tone,

> This book will perhaps only be understood by those who have themselves already thought the thoughts which are expressed in it-or similar thoughts....How far my efforts agree with those of other philosophers I will not decide. Indeed what I have here written makes no claim to novelty in points of detail; and therefore I give no sources, because it is indifferent to me whether what I have thought has already been thought before me by another.[4]

This attitude seems, at least now, rather unacademic. But in this period of his life, we must recall, Wittgenstein was not a member of the academy but a soldier, prisoner of war, gardener, and country school teacher. In fact, it was his intention never to return to the academy again. The *Tractatus* was the culmination of his academic work and the end of philosophy as Wittgenstein knew it; he did not feel concerned in the least with placing it on the appropriate pile of the history of philosophy; he wanted it published and made public, that is all.

It seems then, for a starting point to determine what influences lie beneath the cryptic passages in section six of the *Tractatus,* we are left only to anecdotal evidence. Fortunately for the purposes of this paper, Wittgenstein's life, at least his outer life, has been well documented in secondary literature. Substantial accounts and recollections of his life are provided to us from sources as close to him as his family[5] and friends[6] and as distant as posthumous biographers[7].

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2 Luckhardt, *Sources* pp.82

3 The term 'ethical' here is to be understood in the broadest sense for it must encompass all Wittgenstein's remarks on value, meaning, the meaning of life, death, and the mystical. I will of course be discussing each topic at great length in future pages.

4 Tractatus, preface

5 Hermine Wittgenstein's *My Brother Ludwig* in Rhees *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Personal Recollections.*

6 Paul Engelmann in *Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein with a Memoir,* Maurice Drury in Rhees, etc.

7 Ray Monk in *The Duty of Genius,* Brian McGuinness in *Wittgenstein: A Life,* Georg von Wright in *Wittgenstein, etc.*

These accounts differ dramatically in style and content, from anecdotal accounts to painstakingly precise biographies, but taken together with Wittgenstein's own remarks they paint a relatively clear picture of the young Wittgenstein's life, his influences, and his concerns.

In reviewing secondary sources concerning the young Wittgenstein's life, two names rose above all others as influential in the formation of his attitudes towards ethics. Leo Tolstoy and Arthur Schopenhauer are consistently characterized as being enormous influences in the philosophy and life of Wittgenstein. Schopenhauer, the only philosopher of the two, was Wittgenstein's first philosophical influence. Although this paper will deal only with ethics and related subjects, Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Representation* had a profound effect on all aspects of Wittgenstein's philosophical 'Weltanschauung' in the period of time that the *Notebooks 1914-16* and the *Tractatus* were written. Von Wright writes,

> If I remember rightly, Wittgenstein told me that he had read Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* in his youth and that his first philosophy was a Schopenhauerian epistemological idealism.[8]

Most obviously, the concern with representation in the *Tractatus* clearly reflects this influence; however, many of the paragraphs in section six of the *Tractatus* dealing with 'world' and 'das mystische' have an unmistakable Schopenhauerian ring to them. In the *Notebooks* at many times Schopenhauer's writing can be seen to serve almost as an antithesis for Wittgenstein to formulate his thoughts on willing.

Tolstoy's influence has till now been seen to be much more a personal than philosophical one. Wittgenstein even claimed to like Tolstoy best in an unphilosophical context,

> I once tried to read *Resurrection* but couldn't. You see, when Tolstoy just tells a story he impresses me infinitely more than when he addresses the reader. When he turns his back to the reader then he seems to me *most* impressive....It seems to me his philosophy is most true when its *latent* in the story.[9]

It is evident, however, upon reading the *Notebooks* and the *Tractatus* alongside Tolstoy's *Gospel in Brief* and his later short stories, that Tolstoy's work had a dramatic effect on Wittgenstein's personal life and also found its way into Wittgenstein's philosophy.

In this short work I will attempt to create a hermeneutic of sorts for reading the difficult passages in chapter six of the *Tractatus*. I will provide an exegesis of the passages that can be best understood in light of the influences of Schopenhauer and Tolstoy. To perform this task better I will enlarge the scope

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8 Von Wright, *Wittgenstein* pp.18

9 Malcom, N. *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir* pp.98

of this work to include Wittgenstein's *Notebooks 1914-16*. This is a collection of notes written by Wittgenstein during his war years and its passages form the core of the *Tractatus* itself. The *Notebooks* provide an excellent background in which to understand the precession of thoughts which lead up to some of the frustratingly brief sentences in the *Tractatus* as well as create a sense of cohesion between seemingly unrelated sentences.

Tolstoy and Wittgenstein

Although there are few accounts of Tolstoy's influence on Wittgenstein's philosophical work, there are many accounts of his profound influence on Wittgenstein's personal life. Russell, who met with Wittgenstein shortly after his release from an Italian prison camp at the conclusion of world war one, had this to write to Lady Ottoline Morrell,

> I had felt in his [Wittgenstein's] book a flavour of mysticism, but was astonished when I found out that he had become a complete mystic. He reads people like Kierkegaard and Angelus Silesius, and he seriously contemplates becoming a monk. It all started from William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and grew (not unnaturally) during the winter he spent alone in Norway before the war, when he was nearly mad. Then during the war a curious thing happened. He went on duty to the town of Tarnov in Galicia, and happened to come upon a book shop, which, however, seemed to contain nothing but picture postcards. However, he went inside and found it contained just one book: Tolstoy on the Gospels. He bought it merely because there were no others. He read it and re-read it, and thenseforth had it always with him, under fire and at all times. But on the whole he likes Tolstoy less than Dostoewski(especially Karamazov). He has penetrated deep into mystical ways of thought and feeling, but I think(though he wouldn't agree)that what he likes best in mysticism is its power to make him stop thinking. I don't much think he will really become a monk--it is an idea, not an intention. His intention is to be a teacher. He gave all his money to his brothers and sisters, because he found his earthly possessions a burden. I wish you had seen him.[10]

Russell's characterization of Wittgenstein's Norway period is absolutely correct. The period of time Wittgenstein spent before the war at Cambridge and at his cabin in Norway was perhaps the most difficult of his life. Many days were spent in deep depression, and thoughts of suicide were frequently and seriously entertained . At this point of his life two of his older brothers had taken their lives and a third was to follow at the end of the war. It is not unfair to say that,

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10 Wittgenstein, L. *Letters to Russell, Keynes, and Moore*. pp.82

during the war, Wittgenstein went through a religious conversion of sorts, accompanied, if not facilitated by, Tolstoy's writings.

> What saved him from suicide, however, was not the encouragement he received from Jolles and Frege, but exactly the kind of personal transformation, the religious conversion, he had gone to war to find. He was, as it were saved by the word. During his first month in Galicia, he entered a book shop, where he could find only one book: Tolstoy's *Gospel in Brief*. The book captivated him. It became for him a kind of talisman: he carried it wherever he went, and read it so often that he came to know whole passages of it by heart. He became known to his comrades as the man with the gospels'. For a time he--who before the war had struck Russell as being 'more terrible with Christians' than Russell himself--became not only a believer, but an evangelist, recommending Tolstoy's *Gospel* to anyone in distress. 'If you are not aquainted with it', he later told Flicker, 'then you cannot imagine what an effect it can have on a person.'[11]

The works of Tolstoy's that had the greatest influence on Wittgenstein were the aforementioned *Gospels in Brief* and a group of short stories which Wittgenstein found in published form under the title *Twenty three Tales*. *Gospels in Brief* is essentially a synopsis of the Gospels stressing what are, in Tolstoy's view, the 'fundamentals' or fundamental teachings of Christ. Tolstoy published this work as a reaction to the political and theologically speculative presentations of Christianity of the Orthodox Church in Tolstoy's homeland. In this difficult period of Wittgenstein's life philosophy provided no emancipation from his troubles, in fact, it often sank Wittgenstein to the depths of despair. The world around him, as we can see reflected in his philosophy of the time, had no meaning, no value. Indeed, he and his philosophy had inherited Schopenhauer's nihilism. Tolstoy's work was not simply provocative literature for Wittgenstein, indeed, the message Wittgenstein found in *Gospels in Brief* showed him wherein life lies meaning, showed him wherein the world value resides, Tolstoy's message saved his life. In a letter to Flicker he recalled this time,

> You are living, as it were, in the dark and have not found the saving word. And if I, who am essentially so different from you, should offer some advice, it might seem asinine. However I am going to venture it anyway. Are you acquainted with Tolstoy's *The Gospel in Brief*? At its time, this book virtually kept me alive.[12]

Von Wright has this to say,

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11 Monk,R. *Duty of Genius* pp.116
12 Monk, R. *Duty of Genius* pp.132

> The period of the war was a crisis in Wittgenstein's life. To what extent the turmoil of the time and his experiences in war and captivity contributed to the crisis, I cannot say. A circumstance of great importance was that he became acquainted with the ethical and religious writings of Tolstoy. Tolstoy exercised a strong influence on Wittgenstein's view of life, and also led him to study the gospels.[13]

In fact, after W.W.I, Wittgenstein's life seems to take on a very distinct Tolstoyan feel. Wittgenstein began his post war life by giving away his extremely sizable fortune to his family under the strict conditions that in no way would any money be set aside for him under any condition. He never saw the money again and did indeed live the rest of his life quite meagerly. He studied to be a teacher, like Tolstoy, and also like Tolstoy went to teach peasant children at several country schools. Even after his return to Cambridge, he made a pilgrimage of sorts, I believe in search of Tolstoy's peasant life. He and his friend Francis Skinner went to Russia looking for manual work. All Wittgenstein was offered was a position in philosophy, and so the two returned to England.
It is hard to imagine, then, a work which had such a profound effect of Wittgenstein's life not having some effect on how he viewed the world philosophically.

Schopenhauer and Wittgenstein

As mentioned previously, Schopenhauer was Wittgenstein's first philosophical influence. He was first introduced to *The World As Will and Representation* by his sister when he was still a teenager.

> Certainly he [Wittgenstein] discussed it [his loss of faith] with Gretl, who, to help him in the philosophical reflection consequent on a loss of faith, directed him to the works of Schopenhauer.
>
> Schopenhauer's transcendental idealism, as expressed in his classic, *The World as Will and Representation*, formed the basis of Wittgenstein's earliest philosophy. The book is, in many ways, one that is bound to appeal to an adolescent who has lost his religious faith and is looking for something to replace it. For while Schopenhauer recognizes 'man's need for metaphysics', he insists that it is neither necessary nor possible for an intelligent honest person to believe in the literal truth of religious doctrines. To expect that he should, Schopenhauer says, would be like asking a giant to put on the shoes of a dwarf.[14]

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13 Von Wright, H. *Wittgenstein* pp.23
14 Monk, R. *Duty of Genius* pp.18

This account is verified by Wittgenstein's own recollections as told to his friend von Wright,

> If I remember rightly, Wittgenstein told me that he had read Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* in his youth and that his first philosophy was a Schopenhauerian epistemological idealism.[15]

The attribution by myself of Schopenhauerian influence to Wittgenstein's thought is by no means revelatory. There is a small wealth of secondary literature tracing Schopenhauer's ideas as they manifest themselves in the writings of Wittgenstein. My account will differ in this way. It seems that the bulk of the work done so far on Wittgenstein and Schopenhauer has attempted to make sense of the passages in the *Notebooks* and the *Tractatus* in terms of Schopenhauer's work. Authors like David Weiner and especially P.M.S. Hacker go to great lengths to understand Wittgenstein's sentences often as simple reformations of Schopenhauer's ideas. One reason for this is Wittgenstein's embracing of several Schopenhauerian metaphors which become the central metaphors in the *Tractatus*. Metaphors like the ladder, the eye in the visual field, and the 'limit of the world' give the *Tractatus* an unmistakable Schopenhauerian feel. Although this is a striking similarity between the two, it does not warrant a strong reading of the specific content of Schopenhauer's work as being necessarily positively contributory. On the contrary, I believe that Schopenhauer's work can best be read as being antithetical to Wittgenstein's ideas, especially in terms of the propositions of the *Tractatus*. In fact, much of the Notebook's can be read as Wittgenstein working out exactly what is wrong with Schopenhauer and how he might go about setting it right.

We have reason to believe that there are some aspects of Schopenhauer's philosophy that Wittgenstein never embraced, particularly Schopenhauer's work on the subject and the will which are primary topics in the Notebooks and the *Tractatus*,

> As a boy of sixteen Wittgenstein had read Schopenhauer and been greatly impressed by Schopenhauer's theory of 'the world as idea' (though not 'the world as will')...[16]

There is Geach's recollection from his introduction to the Italian translation of the *Tractatus,*

> Wittgenstein himself stated in conversation that when he was a youth he believed Schopenhauer to have been fundamentally right (though not suprisingly, he could make nothing of the objectification of the will).[17]

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15 Von Wright, *Wittgenstein* pp.18
16 Anscome, G.E.M. *Introduction* pp.11
17 Weiner, D. *Genius and Talent* pp.67

and in later life his opinion of Schopenhauer seems to have waned further,

> There are two words which were frequently used by Wittgenstein, 'deep' and 'shallow'. I remember him saying: 'Kant and Berkeley seem to me to be very deep thinkers. But in Schopenhauer I seem to see to the bottom very quickly'.[18]

Of course the fact that Wittgenstein did not embrace or agree with the entire content of *The World as Will and Representation* does not mean that the book was unimportant to his philosophical development. Quite to the contrary, some of Wittgenstein's greatest lessons came from how his predecessors, in his view, 'got it wrong',

> Here, as in the case with Schopenhauer, there are details to be discussed in a scholarly context--the theory of elements borrowed by Weininger from Mach and Avenarius and echoed by Ludwig in the *Tractatus*, the placing of logic and ethics in the same level; but the personal aspect was the important one. Weininger's thought about character, superficial and half baked at times, came from a deep concern with ethical problems in his own life. This explains why Ludwig later said that his was an important book because of the questions it raised--you could even put the word 'not' before all his answers, the book was still worth thinking about.[19]

In my exegesis of section six of the *Tractatus*, then, I will introduce Schopenhauer, for the most part, as one of Wittgenstein's interlocutors. These interlocutors have more distinct voices in his later writings, especially the *Investigations*, but Wittgenstein always took advantage of this stylistic tool. We see in *The World as Will and Representation*,

> Thus everyone in this twofold regard is the whole world itself, the microcosm; he finds its two sides whole and complete within himself.[20]

and in the *Notebooks*,

> It is true: Man is the microcosm:
> I am my world.

In 5.633 in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein even addresses his interlocutor,

> Where in the world is the metaphysical subject to be noted?
> You say that this case is altogether like that of the eye and the field of sight.(my emphasis)

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18 Rhees, R. *Recollections* pp.95
19 McGuinness, B. *Wittgenstein* pp.40
20 Schopenhauer, A. *World as Will* pp.162

In his book *Genius and Talent*, Weiner also recognizes the interlocutor's function in Wittgenstein's early writing.

> By introducing the "You" at 5.633, Wittgenstein suddenly shifts from monologue to dialogue. Up to this point , he has been simply making assertions. His voice has been like an oracle that casts out definite truths to the world at large. Now he is suddenly arguing with an unnamed interlocutor. The reason for this change of voice is that the passage derives from a segment of Wittgenstein's Notebooks in which he is arguing against Schopenhauer.[21]

This seems to be one of the problematic aspects of reading the *Notebooks* and the *Tractatus*, first realizing that there are interlocutors speaking in the text, and second, deciding which voice is indeed that of Wittgenstein.

Tolstoy and Schopenhauer

I will argue in my exegesis of section six of the *Tractatus* that the views, philosophical and otherwise, of Tolstoy and Schopenhauer are in an important respect incommensurable. In fact, I believe it was because of the Tolstoyan influence in Wittgenstein's life at the time he was writing the *Notebooks,* he felt he had to reformulate Schopenhauer's ideas about the will and the self to be consistent with his own new beliefs. The two did not know each other, but Tolstoy was a strong admirer of Schopenhauer's, to the extent, in fact, that for a time he considered translating *World as Will and Representation* into Russian. Tolstoy makes mention of Schopenhauer in his *Confessions*, a book that we do not know for certain Wittgenstein read, but which contains Tolstoy's account of how his thought turns away from that of Schopenhauer and how in this turn, Tolstoy discovers meaning in his life. Tolstoy characterizes Schopenhauer along with Solomon and the Buddha as being the strongest proponents of philosophical nihilism,

> Only at first had it seemed to me that knowledge had given a positive reply--the reply of Schopenhauer: that life has no meaning and is an evil. But on examining the matter I understood that the reply is not positive, it was only my feeling that so expressed it. Strictly expressed, as it is by the Brahmins and by Solomon and by Schopenhauer, the reply is merely indefinite, or an identity: 0 equals 0, life is nothing. So that philosophical knowledge denies nothing, but only replies that the question cannot be solved by it--that for it the solution remains indefinite.
>
> Having understood this, I understood that it was not possible to seek in rational knowledge for a reply to my question, and that the reply given by my rational knowledge is a mere indication that a reply can only

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21 Weiner, D. *Genius and Talent* pp.124 f.n.80

> be obtained by a different statement of the question and only when the relation of the finite to the infinite is included in the question....In whatever way I stated the question, that relation appeared in the answer. How am I to live?--According to the law of God. What real result will come of my life?--Eternal torment or eternal bliss. What meaning has life that death does not destroy?--Union with the eternal God: heaven....Reasonable knowledge had brought me to a knowledge that my life is senseless--my life had come to a halt and I wished to destroy myself. Looking around on the whole of mankind I saw that people lived and declared they knew the meaning of life. As to others so also to me faith had given a meaning to life and had made life possible.[22]

So Tolstoy recovers from his own nihilism not by re-embracing his own selfish will but by realizing that he must live to do God's will. This is the most important distinction between Tolstoy and Schopenhauer. Both realize that life as life lived for oneself has no meaning, indeed it is an evil. This pushes Schopenhauer to a completely stoical attitude with an emphasis on the complete negation of the will. We see this attitude manifest in Schopenhauer's account of the ideal ethical i.e. 'saintly' life. David Weiner describes Schopenhauer's view as follows,

> The saint recognizes the noumenal will as the fountainhead of endless pain and suffering. In the animal kingdom, the will propels millions of creatures to devour each other alive at every moment. Among humans, the will is responsible for human pain and cruelty.
>
> Having seen the will in this light, the saint resolves to do battle with his innermost essence. In an effort to crush the will, he adopts an ascetic ethos. The saint renounces sexual gratification, worldly posessions, and power; he voluntarily gives up all the amenities; he adopts a severe, ascetic regimen. Every privation is welcomed by the saint, because suffering subdues the will.[23]

Tolstoy, on the other hand, realizes that he must embrace his will, not as will for self, or altogether denial of will, but in doing God's will through good will for others. It is this distinction, willlessness vs. selflessness that must be kept in mind when interpreting the passages particularly in the *Notebooks* where Wittgenstein struggles to form his own conceptions of will and self. This also indicates how problematic any attempt might be which chose to interpret Wittgenstein's passages in terms of a harmonious Tolstoyan and Schopenhauerian influence.

Exegetical Eccentricities

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22 Tolstoy, L. *A Confession and Gospels in Brief* pp.50
23 Weiner, D. *Genius and Talent* pp.93

Before I begin my exegesis I wish to make a few points clear. It is with great disappointment that I must write this exegesis in a linear fashion, discussing one term and concept at a time. My disappointment arises from my belief that these passages should not be understood in terms of a traditional philosophical argument. It is only my lack of a better method which forces my to interpret the passages one after the other in a line. Most properly, these passages are understood not as an argument to a conclusion, but as a web of beliefs which each strand supporting and being supported by another. I believe this literary style arises from Wittgenstein's condition at the time these comments were written. Wittgenstein did not intend for the latter part of the *Tractatus* to be a traditional philosophical argument, instead they are a description of Wittgenstein's beliefs at the time. During the war Wittgenstein's conceptions of life, death, value, will, and happiness took on whole new meanings and definitions as his life changed so profoundly. The cryptic passages from the *Notebooks* and the *Tractatus* cannot be understood as, and do not stand alone as arguments. They are descriptions, indeed philosophical descriptions, of Wittgenstein's beliefs about life and existence at the time. Each concept flows from one into the other and to be understood properly, must be understood in terms of each other and thus as a whole. Although I will be discussing section six of the *Tractatus* in four distinct parts, I cannot emphasize enough, and I will do my best to show, that all the propositions and ideas hinge on each other.

My second point will begin my exegesis. As previously mentioned, in the Notebooks, Wittgenstein has a tendency to formulate several seemingly contrary propositions within the space of a few short passages. Usually, the interlocutor's voice can be made out and hence Wittgenstein's point shown, but there are several places in the Notebooks that have left even the best interpreters musing at what Wittgenstein is actually trying to say,

> This passage...is in my view the most obscure in the *Tractatus*, and I am myself very far from understanding it thoroughly.[24]

Less honest commentators than Mounce tend to simply reformulate and completely obscure Wittgenstein's accounts 1. by reading then as coherent commensurable sentences, and 2. by forcing them into the mold of a traditional philosophical argument. Even Wittgenstein had trouble upon reflection with his own formulations in the *Notebooks*,

> Here I am still making crude mistakes! No doubt about that![25]

> I am conscious of the complete unclairity of all these sentences.[26]

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24 Mounce, H.O. *Wittgenstein's Tractatus* pp.88
25 *Notebooks*, pp.78
26 Ibid. pp.79

I have discovered, however, an interesting aspect of Wittgenstein's style that can help reduce the number of propositions in the *Notebooks* that demand our careful attention here. It is a well known aspect of Wittgenstein's later writing that he introduces a passage or section with the precise point he is attempting to make.[27] The remainder of the passage entertains objections or works out the nuances of the particular problem through the reformulation of the point. I maintain that, to a certain extent, Wittgenstein uses this tool to aid himself in the *Notebooks*. The discussion of ethics, value, etc. like in the *Tractatus*, appears at the end of the *Notebooks*. At the beginning of the passages we are concerned with there is a lengthy passage dated 11.6.16

> 11.6.16
> What do I know about God and the purpose of life?
> I know that this world exists.
> That I am placed in it like my eye in its visual field.
> That something about it is problematic, which we call its meaning.
> That this meaning does not lie in the world but outside it.
> That life is the world.
> That my will penetrates the world.
> That my will is good or evil.
> Therefore that good and evil are somehow connected with the meaning of the world.
> The meaning of life, i.e. the meaning of the world, we can call God.
> And connect with this the comparison of God to a father.
> To pray is to think about the meaning of life.
> I cannot bend the happenings of the world to my will: I am completely powerless.
> I can only make myself independent of the world--and so in a certain sense master it--by renouncing any influence on happenings.[28]

There are two interesting aspects of this passage. The first is that it appears to be a summary or conclusion of Wittgenstein's remaining *Notebook* passages and more importantly, his beliefs of the time.[29] This is quite helpful in that it allows us, in more confusing passages, to distinguish Wittgenstein's voice from that of his interlocutor and his more firm beliefs from his own admitted bits of nonsense. In this way, this passage becomes a template or guide of sorts to the philosophical gist of the particular *Notebooks* passages we are concerned with while, at the same time, allowing us to avoid traveling down dead end paths of speculation.

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27 This point is made by Kripke in his book *Wittgenstein on Rule Following and Private Language*. Kripke suggests that the entire gist of the 'private language argument' is given in the earliest sections on rule following.

28 *Notebooks* pp.73

29 In correspondence, Jim Edwards (*Ethics Without Philosophy*) has agreed with my suspicion here, that the intial passage is indeed a summary.

The second interesting aspect of this passage is that it bears a striking resemblance to Tolstoy's summary of *Gospels in Brief*. The similarities in form and themes are uncanny, Tolstoy's influence cannot be mistaken. Tolstoy's summary reads as follows,

> 1. Man is the son of an infinite source: a son of that father not by the flesh but by the spirit.
> 2. Therefore man should serve that source in spirit.
> 3. The life of all men has a divine origin. It alone is holy.
> 4. Therefore man should serve that source in the life of all men. Such is the will of the father.
> 5. The service of the will of the father of life gives life.
> 6. Therefore the gratification of one's own will is not necessary for life.
> 7. Temporal life is food for true life.
> 8. Therefore the true life is independent of time: it is in the present.
> 9. Time is an illusion of life; life in the past and in the future conceals from men the true life of the present.
> 10. Therefore man should strive to destroy the illusion of the temporal life of the past and future.
> 11. True life is life in the present, common to all men and manifesting itself in love.
> 12. Therefore he who lives by love in the present, through the common life of all men, unites with the Father, the source and foundation of life.[30]

Seeing these passages side by side not only confirms the Tolstoyan influence in the *Notebooks* and the *Tractatus* but will be a useful tool for the more concrete exegesis to follow.

Finally, if there is ever a point where passages from *Notebooks* contradict or seem to contradict passages from the *Tractatus*, the *Tractatus* passages will always be understood as having the literal 'right of way'. Although it is no mistake that *Notebooks* survived Wittgenstein (he was infamous for destroying his own manuscripts which fell out of his favour), the *Tractatus* must be seen as Wittgenstein's final opinion on any particular matter which concerns both works.

I have broken section six of the *Tractatus* into four parts which have partially distinct themes. I stress that the content of these parts will tend to run together especially when supplemented by there Notebooks counterparts, indeed, I will make a conscious effort to show the relationships between the four parts and the major concepts contained in them. The order of the *Notebooks* passages confirms the lack of precise distinction between concepts, in that, at several points in the *Tractatus*, passages immediately follow each other while their places of origin in the *Notebooks* are completely distinct in date and context. This demonstrates the multiplicity of contexts many of the passages can, and most properly must, be understood in. I stress the distinction between the parts to be fuzzy, loosely based on Wittgenstein's numbering system and the

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30 *A Confession and the Gospel in Brief* pp.118

major concepts on which the individual propositions are focused. The four parts will consist of the following propositions:

Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4
6.37	6.41	6.43	6.5
6.371	6.42	6.431	6.52
6.372	6.421	6.4311	6.521
6.373	6.422	6.432	6.522
6.374	6.423	6.4321	6.54

Part I: Causality, Necessity, and Will

Schopenhauer's philosophical work begins with his dissertation *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason,* in which he gives his account of the nature of reason and understanding. In the rational world of Schopenhauer, there exists four types of necessity: causal, logical, mathematical, and psychological. Wittgenstein's remark at 6.37 seems to address and contradict Schopenhauer's assumption,

> A necessity for one thing to happen because another has happened does not exist. There is only logical necessity.[31]

This passage introduces one of two interesting views Wittgenstein holds about the will in general, one descriptive, which we will partially discuss here, and one normative, which we will discuss later. The first attitude seems to be a causal skepticism (at least) about the efficacy of the will in relation to matters in the world. In fact, this statement about the will seems to be stronger than the skepticism implied by 'A necessity...does not exist'. This is followed closely in the *Tractatus* by an equally strong statement,

> The world is independent of my will.[32]

These statements seem in a very common sense way to be incorrect. I see an apple before my eye, will to pick it up, my hand reaches out and lifts it, I put it down and repeat this gesture 100 times with the same results, does this not show that my will does have some efficacy? For Wittgenstein, it would seem not, in 6.374 he suggests an even more fantastic feat of the will,

> Even if everything we wished were to happen, this would only be, so to speak, a favour of fate, for there is no logical connection between will and world, which would guarantee this and the assumed physical connection itself we could not again will.[33]

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31 *Tractatus* 6.37
32 *Tractatus* 6.373
33 *Tractatus* 6.374

Here Wittgenstein seems clearer about the criteria the will would have to meet to be considered causally related to the world, it would require a 'logical connection'. So if the world is now 'independent of my will', what it would have to be to be 'dependent', is logically connected. This would seem to set some more common sense parameters to the discussion of the will, in that, Wittgenstein does not attempt to refute common sense or experience in saying will has no causal efficacy, it simply lacks causal(logical) necessity. In a passage from the Notebooks, Wittgenstein demonstrates exactly why he can find no logical connection between will and world,

> At any rate I can imagine carrying out the act of will for raising my arm, but my arm does not move. (E.G., a sinew is torn.) True, but, it will be said, the sinew surely moves and that just shows the act of will related to the sinew and not the arm. But let us go farther and suppose that even the sinew did not move, and so on. We should then arrive at the position that the act of will does not relate to a body at all, and so that in the ordinary sense of the world there is no such thing as the act of the will.[34]

So for Wittgenstein there is no such thing as the act of will that has a necessary logical connection to the world. This does not seem to be a particularly enlightening point, however, in light of this next passage from Schopenhauer it does become clearer exactly why it is important for Wittgenstein to make this point,

> The act of will and action of the body...are directly identical....Thus actual willing is inseparable from doing, and in the narrowest sense, that alone is an act of will which is stamped as such by a deed. On the other hand, mere resolves of the will, until they are carried out, are only intentions....
> Therefore, the will itself is active only in real action, consequently in muscular action, hence in irritability; thus the will properly objectifies itself therein....Now if, say, the motor nerve leading to my hand is severed, my will can no longer move it. But this is not because it is ceased to be, like every other part of my body, the objectivity, the mere visibility of my will, or in other words because the irritability has vanished, but because the impression of the motive, in consequence of which alone I can move my hand, cannot reach it and act on its muscles as a stimulus, for the line connecting it with the brain is broken. Hence in this part my will is really deprived only of the impression of the motive. The will objectifies itself directly in irritability, not in sensibility.[35]

Wittgenstein is simply refuting Schopenhauer's notion that the will has this necessary physical connection to the world, the notion that our action and will

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34 *Notebooks*, pp.86
35 *World as Will* pt.II pp.249

are in constant conjunction. This is a necessary and important step for Wittgenstein in distancing himself from Schopenhauer's description of the will. It is an essential first step in that it allows Wittgenstein to distinguish between the will as causal efficacy and the will as bearer of ethics. His effort will downplay the importance of the causal element of the will and focus on the will as attitude towards the world. For Schopenhauer, this distinction is impossible due to our will being constantly manifest in our actions. It is this interconnection that forces Schopenhauer to advocate such a radical stoic attitude to establish a sense of well-being in the world. A willess-ness. For Schopenhauer, a normative attitude(stoicism) is based simply on the description/characterization of will. Wittgenstein makes clear how unacceptable the notion of a will characterized by physical necessity appears to him,

> For the consideration of willing makes it look as if one part of the world were closer to me that another (which would be intolerable).[36]

Wittgenstein does not seem, then, to want to make any particularly profound point about the will as causal agent other than to distance himself from the opinion of Schopenhauer. Wittgenstein establishes this separation to avoid the philosophical obligation to stoicism that Schopenhauer is forced into. It will become clearer why this is so important for Wittgenstein in section three when I discuss his description of the will as 'attitude towards the world' and 'bearer of good and evil'.

In the *Tractatus*, however, there appears a new villain to take the place of Schopenhauer and serve as a contemporary opponent.

> At the basis of the whole modern view of the world lies the illusion that the so-called laws of nature are the explanations of natural phenomena.[37]

> So people stop short at natural laws as at something unassailable, as did the ancients of God and fate.
>
> And they are both right and wrong. But the ancients were clearer, in so far as they recognized one clear conclusion, whereas in the modern system it should appear as though *everything* were explained.[38]

Here again Wittgenstein attacks explanations based on supposed causal necessity. This time his criticism is directed at the value of laws of nature, causal connections, being explanations, not simply descriptions. Wittgenstein's quarrel with Schopenhauer was based on Schopenhauer's placing too much value in a inaccurate description of the will. This lead for the most part to Schopenhauer's advocacy of a radical denial of the will, an unacceptable position for Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein's quarrel with the 'modern view' is that it

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36 *Notebooks* pp.88
37 *Tractatus* 6.371
38 *Tractatus* 6.372

also places too much value in causal explanations, not because they are inaccurate(like Schopenhauer's) but because they attempt to explain too much: 'everything'. Wittgenstein of course believes there is more to the world that what simply appears to be the case,

> Not *how* the world is, is the mystical, but *that* it is.[39]

Hence Wittgenstein's comparison of the 'modern' scientific view with that of the ancients. The ancients understood the foundations of their beliefs as something mysterious, ineffable, while the modern view presumes to understand everything about the world via description of it. Wittgenstein maintains this description cannot, as it seems to, serve also as an explanation that does away with all mysterious aspects of our existence. I will return to this subject in part four as Wittgenstein once again entertains similar thoughts in the conclusion of the *Tractatus*.

Part II: Sense and Value

> The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is, and happens as it does happen. In it there is no value--and if there were, it would be of no value.
>
> If there is a value which is of value, it must lie outside all happening and being-so. For all happening and being-so is accidental.
>
> It must lie outside the world.[40]

In 6.41 of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein further articulates his opposition to the 'modern view'. One of Wittgenstein's central concerns in the passages of section six, indeed a concern of the entire *Tractatus*, is what sense we derive from language, from the world, from experience. Wittgenstein's concern with the 'modern view' based on laws of nature(scientific explanation) seems to be concerned with this view leading us down one of two equally disagreeable paths. One is Schopenhauer's nihilistic path, that there is no sense, no value in the world. That life is meaningless and absurd. If facts can have no value, the world consists entirely of facts, 'the world is all that is the case', it seems to follow that the world, life is without value. I demonstrate this point in Wittgensteinian terminology because careless readings of Wittgenstein have seen this to be his point as well.

The second disagreeable path is that value can be found in the world in some arbitrary, relative sense. A formulation of this that comes to mind might be something like "what is valuable in life is what makes me happy(increases my utility?), therefore the meaning of my life is to pursue this happiness". This might also be an example of a 'bad' Schopenhauerian life based on the endless pursuit of the fulfillment of an insatiable will. One of these view simply negates

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39 *Tractatus* 6.44
40 *Tractatus* 6.41

the existence of value for Wittgenstein, the other in a sense, de-values it, reduces it to a vulgar form.

In the 6.4's of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein attempts to give his formulation of the exact nature of value and exactly in what context we can understand this value. The first sentence of 6.41 makes us recall Wittgenstein's summary passage in the *Notebooks,*

> That something about it [the world] is problematic, which we call its meaning.
> That this meaning does not lie in the world but outside it.[41]

So the sense or meaning of the world does indeed exist, and it exists outside the world, i.e. outside the realm of facts, of language. In fact the first three sentences of 6.41 address each of the disagreeable views that I presented. 'The sense of the world must lie outside the world' shows that he does understand the world as having a 'sense'(although the exact nature of this 'sense'is still problematic). The second and third sentences 'In the world everything is as it is, and happens as it does happen. In it there is no value--and if there were, it would be of no value.' seem to address precisely the second disagreeable viewpoint, that of relative value. 'if there were, it would be of no value' suggests that all attribution of value to facts(which of course occurs daily) has no 'true' value in the way Wittgenstein understands the criteria for value if it is to exist at all. This also suggests a strong element of objective valuation which I will discuss a bit further on.

Strangely, this attribution of sense to the world is almost a complete contradiction of Wittgenstein's theory of meaning. Anything which is not a description of a state of affairs, a fact, hence an occurrence in the world, can formally be described as nonsense. Now we see Wittgenstein attributing sense to the world itself and boldly stating that this sense lie outside the world. If this sense exists for Wittgenstein, surely it must be something different from his notion of linguistic sense. This point is emphasized in the next passages,

> Hence also there can be no ethical propositions.
> Propositions cannot express anything higher.[42]

> It is clear ethics cannot be expressed.
> Ethics is transcendental.
> (Ethics and aesthetics are one.)[43]

In the first passage Wittgenstein can be seen as reinforcing his criteria for linguistic meaning 'propositions can express nothing higher' while in the second, salvaging the sense or meaning of ethics 'Ethics is transcendental'. As to what

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41 *Notebooks* pp.54
42 *Tractatus* 6.42
43 *Tractatus* 6.421

the exact nature of 'transcendental' is, remains to be seen. All we can muster now, in terms of a definition, is what 'transcendental' isn't. Obviously what ethics transcends is the 'world' or totality of facts. Since only facts can be described by language, ethics, which does have a 'sense', appears to be something that 'is' but is not describable through propositions. 'Transcendental', then, appears to be a description of experience which is not an element of the factual 'world'. This question, however, still remains: what is it, according to Wittgenstein, that exists outside the world of facts?

Leaving the nature of the transcendental aside for a short time, Wittgenstein inquires further into the nature of the ethical,

> When an ethical law of the form, 'Thou shalt...', is laid down, one's first thought is, 'And what if I do not do it?' It is clear, however, that ethics has nothing to do with punishment and reward in the usual sense of the terms. So our questions about the consequences of an action must be unimportant.--At least those consequences should not be events. For there must be something right about the question we posed. There must indeed be some kind of ethical reward and ethical punishment, but they must reside in the action itself.
>
> (And it is also clear that the reward must be something pleasant and the punishment something unpleasant.)[44]

Wittgenstein's first sentence must be understood in the context of his previous discussion. He is not simply questioning the justification for normative claims as any ordinary skeptical inquiry might. We must take for granted that Wittgenstein feels, to a great extent, compelled by these claims and that his compulsion requires some philosophical consideration. For the most part in the first sentence Wittgenstein is reaffirming his belief that there is a sense or meaning of the world. It follows too, then, that there is a sense to ethics. Wittgenstein asking 'And what if I do not do it?' places the question in context. 'It is clear, however, that ethics has nothing to do with reward and punishment in the usual sense', shows that ethics has nothing to do with calculating the utility of an action or behavior in any sense. The threat of punishment for the crime of stealing is not, for Wittgenstein, an ethical dissuasion. Nor is any consideration of consequences of behavior ethically relevant. Even questions pertaining to such behavior are 'unimportant'. Recall Wittgenstein's disinterest in the efficacy of the will. Part of the reason for this might be seen in his complete disinterest in calculating the consequences of our actions(at least in terms of governing the way we act).

In turning away from any consideration of consequentialism in ethics, Wittgenstein greatly narrows the field of what ethics is, can be, concerned with. His talk of the 'ethical reward and punishment residing in the actions themselves' seems to smack of some kind of deontology. Schopenhauer was in fact the strictest of deontologists, so much so, that he even criticized Kant's ethics as

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44 *Tractatus* 6.422

being too consequentialist. He accuses Kant of the re-introduction of eudaemonism in the formulation of his doctrine of the highest good.[45] However, Schopenhauer's ethics is purely descriptive while Wittgenstein is struggling to understand his compulsion to follow moral imperatives. The conception of rewards is re-introduced as well in the last sentence. Not rewards in the usual sense which he has already dismissed, but ethical rewards.

So the performance of an action can result in one being rewarded or punished, not in the sense that we are given money or a jail term, but an ethical sense. We seem to follow these rules in accordance with the 'sense of the world' as it strikes us. We cannot be compelled by any sort of Kantian imperative, this(acting reasonably) is still consequentialist in Wittgenstein's terms. The answer, then, to Wittgenstein's questioning of his compulsion towards ethical norms begins to take on the same look as the question of the nature of ethics, and the question of the sense of the world. Years later, Wittgenstein again had a chance to reflect on this question, this time with members of the Vienna Circle,

> Schlick says that in theological ethics there used to be two conceptions of the essence of the good: according to the shallower interpretation the good is good because it is what God wants; according to the profounder interpretation God wants the good because it is good. I think that the first interpretation is the profounder one: what God commands, that is good. For it cuts off the way to any explanation 'why' it is good, while the second interpretation is the shallow, rationalistic one, which proceeds 'as if' you could give reasons for what is good.
>
> The first conception says clearly that the essence of the good has nothing to do with facts and hence cannot be explained by any proposition. If there is any proposition expressing precisely what I think, it is the proposition 'What God commands, that is good.'[46]

It seems as if our exegesis thus far has served mostly to raise questions about Wittgenstein's propositions and done little to answer them. Hopefully this will soon change for in 6.423, Wittgenstein introduces a concept that will be the key to understanding the relationship of all the propositions in section six.

> Of the will as the bearer of the ethical we cannot speak.
> And the will as a phenomenon is only of interest to psychology[47]

The first interesting point here is that Wittgenstein finally dismisses the notion of the will in terms of its causal efficacy as a problem primarily unphilosophical. The second interesting point is Wittgenstein's introduction of a new conception of the will; the will as 'bearer of the ethical'. Fortunately his claim about the

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45 Schopenhauer, A. *On the Basis of Morality* pp.49
46 Waismann, F. *Ludwig Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle* pp.115
47 *Tractatus* 6.423

ineffable nature of this conception of the will is only found in the *Tractatus*. He originally develops and works through the idea in the *Notebooks*.

> 21.7.16
> What really is the situation of the human will? I will call 'will' first and foremost the bearer of good and evil.[48]

This has a distinctly Kantian ring, if we think back to the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals,*

> Nothing in the world--indeed nothing even beyond the world--can possibly be conceived which could be called good without qualification except a *good will.*[49]

Although this is about as far as Wittgenstein and Kant might want to walk along hand in hand, it is a good description of how Wittgenstein wishes to introduce his notion of ethics into the world. He seems to arrive at this idea after again struggling to dismiss all forms of consequentialism,

> Let us imagine a man who could use none of his limbs and hence could, in the ordinary sense, not exercise his will. He could, however, think and want and communicate his thoughts to someone else. Could therefore do good or evil through the other man. Then it is clear that ethics would have validity for him. too, and that he in the ethical sense is the bearer of a will.
>
> Now is there any difference in principle between this will and that will which sets the human body in motion?
>
> Or is the mistake here this: even wanting(thinking) is an activity of the will? (And in this sense, indeed, a man without will would not be alive.)
>
> But can we conceive a being that isn't capable of Will at all, but only of Idea (of seeing for example)? In some sense it seems impossible. But if it were possible then there could also be a world without ethics.[50]

It comes clear to Wittgenstein that will as intention towards the world is the point where ethics and the world come into contact. With the facts of the world remaining as they are, Wittgenstein's willing agent becomes the bearer of good and evil. We recall Wittgenstein in his *Notebooks* summary passage,

> That my will penetrates the world.

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48 *Notebooks* pp.76
49 Kant, E. *Groundwork* pp.11
50 *Notebooks* pp.76

That my will is good or evil.
Therefore that good and evil are somehow connected with the meaning of the world.

It still remains to be seen how in fact the will is connected with the meaning of the world, but with Wittgenstein's new picture of the will in hand we can proceed to the most difficult group of passages in section six.

Part III: Happy is as Happy Does

The passages in the 6.4's are indeed some of the most difficult of the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein gives the reader precious little background which is required to fully understand them. It is no wonder they are so often passed over in formal discussions of the *Tractatus*. The first passage reads,

> If the good or bad exercise of the will does alter the world, it can alter only the limits of the world, not the facts--not what can be expressed by means of language.
>
> In short the effect must be that it becomes an altogether different world. It must, so to speak, wax and wane as a whole.
>
> The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man.[51]

In order best to understand Wittgenstein's notion of the 'good or bad exercise of the will' it will be helpful to look back to Tolstoy's summary of *Gospels in Brief*.

5. The service of the will of the father of life gives life.
6. Therefore the gratification of one's own will is not necessary for life.
7. Temporal life is food for true life.
8. Therefore the true life is independent of time: it is in the present.

I believe it is appropriate to assume that this is the good exercise of the will that Wittgenstein wishes to characterize in 6.43. The 'service of the will of the father' is for Wittgenstein the 'good' exercise of the will, while the 'gratification of one's own will' would be an example of the bad. In fact, the *Notebooks* show that this seems to be the calling that Wittgenstein is resigned to,

> Is it possible to will good, to will evil, and not to will?
>
> Or is only he happy who does not will?
>
> "To love one's neighbor" would mean to will!

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51 *Tractatus* 6.43

This is precise spot in the Notebooks where we can witness Schopenhauer running headlong into Tolstoy. In the second passage we see all Wittgenstein's choices mapped out. Wittgenstein's Tolstoyan objection '"To love one's neighbor" would mean to will', is the final contradiction of Schopenhauer's stoicism 'Or is only he happy who does not will?' After this point in the *Notebooks* we see Wittgenstein's concern shift from the will-less life to the happy life. This happy life must be see as the pursuit of his Tolstoyan call, not to pursue his own will, but the 'will of the father'.

This is, however, only the beginning of the matter. If we return to 6.43, we see that the exercise of the will somehow 'alters the limits of the world', in what respect can this take place? My initial confusion with these passages came from an attitude I had taken towards Wittgenstein's 'world' metaphor. In his own words I was "held captive by a picture". The image of a world (like one might see the earth from space) growing and shrinking served to be the greatest confusion to my understanding of the passage. It is the escape from the visual metaphor that Wittgenstein's passage that allows for a more clear understanding of this passage.

If we remember from our previous discussion, the world has sense or meaning in two different regards. Linguistic meaning applies to the facts in the world and Wittgenstein assures us that this meaning remains unchanged by the exercise of the will, 'it[the good or bad exercise of the will] can only alter the limits of the world, not the facts--not what can be expressed by means of language'. A different form of 6.34 in the *Notebooks* gives us the clue to understanding how in fact the limit of the world changes the meaning,

> The world must, so to speak, wax or wane as a whole. As if by accession or loss of meaning.[52]

It is not linguistic meaning that is gained or lost as the world waxes and wanes, but the meaning of the world as a whole that we referred to earlier. It is also not that the happier one is the more meaning one's world has, for one's world to wax is for the willing agent to realize that the world, as a whole, has a meaning, has a sense. It is in this transcendence of Schopenhauerian nihilism that there arises a question about the existence of the world as such. Wittgenstein's *Notebooks* summary shows this realization as the foundation of Wittgenstein's understanding of 'the purpose of life'.

> What do I know about God and the purpose of life?
> I know that this world exists.
> That I am placed in it like my eye in its visual field.
> That something about it is problematic, which we call its meaning.
> That this meaning does not lie in the world but outside it.

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52 *Notebooks* pp.73

As we see in the Notebooks summary, this is a major step for Wittgenstein, the realization that there is a non-linguistic sense to the world and the struggle to embrace this sense is ethics. For Wittgenstein, this is the fundamental first step in the transcendence of nihilism, the realization that something exists outside the world which makes it possible for the world, for life, to have a meaning.

The passage that logically follows next is actually the last passage in part III, however, it gives us some clue as to how the world might suddenly take on this new meaning and how this occurrence is facilitated by the will.

> The contemplation of the world sub specie aeterni is its contemplation as a limited whole.
> The feeling of the world as a limited whole is the mystical feeling.[53]

Wittgenstein adopts this passage from Schopenhauer who adopted it from Spinoza before him. In the *Notebooks*, Wittgenstein discussed the perspective of sub specie aeterni this way,

> 7.10.16
> The work of art is the object seen *sub specie aeternitatis*; and the good life is the world seen *sub specie aternitatis*. This is the connection between art and ethics.
>
> The usual way of looking at things sees objects as it were from the midst of them, the view *sub specie aeternitatis* from outside.
>
> In such a way that they have the whole world as a background.
>
> Is this it perhaps--in this view the object is seen together with space and time instead of in space and time.[54]

Kant's and Schopenhauer's aesthetics are based on a perspective of complete and necessary disinterest towards the object of aesthetic interest in question. It is from this state of disinterest that the feeling of the sublime is experienced by the perceiver. Wittgenstein does not simply adopt this theory for his characterization of the ethical attitude but expands it to include the ethical perspective as well. It is in this respect that '(ethics and aesthetics are one)'[55]. The agent of the good will, as bearer of the ethical, has this disinterested attitude towards the world. In disregarding ethical consequentialism as well as the will to self interest, the ethical agent is removed from the task of calculating facts in the world and placed in a position where the world is seen 'together with space and time instead of in space and time.

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53 *Tractatus* 6.45
54 *Notebooks* pp.83
55 *Tractatus* 6.421

The contemplation of the world sub specie aeterni is a direct result of the ethical agent's turning her back on the calculative life of self interest and solely focusing on good willing, i.e. fulfilling the will of God. The 'mystical feeling' of 6.45 is the feeling of the sense of the world. It is the accession of meaning resulting from the 'limits of the world' waxing before the ethical agent.

So for Kant, Schopenhauer, and Wittgenstein, the experience of the sublime cannot manifest itself in the subject if that person has a 'vested interest' so to speak, in the object concerned. For Wittgenstein, the ethical agent cannot experience 'das Mystische' the mystical feeling of the meaning of life, if she is tied to the world through her attempts to fulfill her own will and desires. It is only through the renunciation of all ties to the world, or the object of art, that the perspective of sub specie aeterni becomes possible, and hence the manifestation of the sublime, the mystical.

It is incorrect to assume, then, that Wittgenstein's 'ethics and aesthetics are one' is an ontological claim, a claim about the essence of either particular experience. The similarity between the two is found in the attitude of ethical or aesthetic agent, it is purely subjective. In fact, Wittgenstein would hold that, ontologically speaking, there is no fact to the matter of ethics or aesthetics outside the realm of the agent. Any talk about ethics or aesthetics which would disregard the subject would necessarily involve the attribution of value to facts and we recall 'propositions (about facts) can express nothing higher'.

This brings us to the last sentence in 6.43, 'The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man'. What can we say about this passage by simply drawing on our discussion to the present? We know that it is not the facts nor the propositions that describe them which differ between the world of the happy and unhappy man. The difference must, then, lie in the meaning of the world. For the happy man, the world has a sense, for the unhappy man, the world is absurd, meaningless. Why happy though? This happiness that Wittgenstein describes seems to be somewhat different than the happiness on might receive from, for instance, eating a nice tomato, but this is Wittgenstein's only reference to happiness in the entire *Tractatus*. Again we must refer back to the *Notebooks* to see exactly where this discussion of happiness has its beginnings.

> I am either happy or unhappy, that is all. It can be said: good or evil do not exist.[56]

In what respect do good or evil not exist? Facts in the world can not be good or evil, so the bearer of good and evil is the 'I' the I that is either happy or unhappy i.e. willing good or willing evil i.e. self-less or self-full willing.

> In order to live happily I must be in agreement with the world. And that is what 'being happy' means.[57]

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56 *Notebooks* pp.74
57 *Notebooks* pp.74

The I stands in agreement with the world insofar as it understands that there is a sense to the world. The world of the unhappy stands in opposition to the unhappy I because it lacks a sense. The happy world is the world seen sub specie aeterni, as a limited whole. The happy world has a sense, a meaning, and insofar as the happy I understands this meaning, it lives in accordance with it, living the self-less life.

> I am then, so to speak, in agreement with that alien will on which I appear dependent. That is to say, 'I am doing the will of God'.[58]

It is difficult to understand, in a sense, why Wittgenstein chooses to refer to this religious calling as the 'meaning' of the world. To a great extent, the meaning of the world seems meaning-less. In his linguistic sense of meaning, we can always say exactly wherein the meaning of a proposition lies. In Wittgenstein's meaning of life we have no such criteria. Wittgenstein, in fact, struggles with this question,

> I keep on coming back to this! simply the happy life is good, the unhappy bad. And if I now ask myself: But why should I live *happily*, then this of itself seems to me to be a tautological question; the happy life seems to be justified, of itself, it seems that this *is* the only right life.[59]

For Wittgenstein there is no explanation, no benchmark for this life that can be articulated. There is only the feeling of inner accordance and happiness which does not always manifest itself with a smile.

> What is the objective mark of the happy, harmonious life? Here it is again clear that there cannot be any such mark, that can be *described*. This mark can not be a physical one but only a metaphysical one, a transcendental one.[60]

So the happy person might not, to any outside observer, seem or appear to be happy in any normal sense of the word. The usual 'happy' characteristics do not verify that any particular person is living in accordance with the world. Indeed, outward appearance cannot be considered for it, again, is a concern only for the will-full self. Perhaps Wittgenstein's troublesome last words can best be understood in this context. We read Malcom struggling with their seemingly paradoxical nature,

> Before losing consciousness he had said to Mrs. Bevan(who was with him through the night) 'Tell them I've had a wonderful life' By them he

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58 *Notebooks* pp.74
59 *Notebooks* pp.78
60 *Notebooks* pp.78

> undoubtedly meant his close friends. When I think of his profound pessimism, the intensity of his mental and moral suffering, the relentless way in which he drove his intellect, his need for love together with the harshness that repelled love, I am inclined to believe that his life was fiercely unhappy. Yet at the end he himself exclaimed that it had been 'wonderful'! To me this seems a mysterious and strangely moving utterance.[61]

Now that we have some notion of what, for Wittgenstein, the 'happy' life entails, we can entertain his thoughts about the end of that life in 6.431 and 6.4311 in the *Tractatus*.

> As in death, too, the world does not change, but ceases.[62]

> Death is not an event in life. Death is not lived through.
> If by eternity is understood not endless temporal duration but timelessness, then he lives eternally who lives in the present.
> Our life is endless in the way our visual field is without limit.[63]

6.431 simply seems to make a point of perspective, If I watch Jones die then the facts of my world do indeed change, Jones' world however, ceases to exist as a world of facts. In 6.4311, Wittgenstein seems to perhaps be making a stronger point about death and the possibility of life after death. It seems that Wittgenstein cannot make sense of the notion of eternity or an afterlife in the usual ways they are explained by religious believers. The notion of death as a change in form or passage is strictly ruled out, 'Death is not lived through.' Wittgenstein does attempt, however, to hold on to some notion of eternity or timelessness. It is essential here to recall Tolstoy's summary to fully understand Wittgenstein's remarks.

> 7. Temporal life is food for true life.
> 8. Therefore the true life is independent of time: it is in the present.
> 9. Time is an illusion of life; life in the past and in the future conceals from men the true life of the present.
> 10. Therefore man should strive to destroy the illusion of the temporal life of the past and future.
> 11. True life is life in the present, common to all men and manifesting itself in love.
> 12. Therefore he who lives by love in the present, through the common life of all men, unites with the Father, the source and foundation of life.[64]

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61 Macom, N. *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir* pp.81
62 *Tractatus* 6.431
63 *Tractatus* 6.4311
64 *A Confession and the Gospel in Brief* pp.118

We can see Tolstoy's untraditional concern with a-temporality as becoming manifest in Wittgenstein's passages. Half of Tolstoy's summary deals, not with eternity in the afterlife, but with eternity in the present. For Tolstoy, the true life is life lived out of time. This true life can be achieved in the way that Wittgenstein describes, with a disassociated attitude towards all temporal and consequential concerns. Hence in 6.4311 'he lives in eternity who lives in the present'. For Wittgenstein, eternity is not 'a really really long time' but timelessness, and that timelessness is found in the present, not in a future.

In 6.4312 Wittgenstein considers a more traditional account of eternity and survival,

> The temporal immortality of the soul of man, that is to say, its eternal survival also after death, is not only in no way guaranteed, but this assumption in the first place will not do for us what we always tried to make it do. Is a riddle solved by the fact that I live forever? Is this eternal life not as enigmatic as our present one? The solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies *outside* space and time.(It is not problems of natural science which have to be solved.)[65]

In this passage, perhaps the clearest in all of the sixes, Wittgenstein asks a simple but brilliant question, What riddle is solved by the fact that I live forever? Surely the world is just as meaningless if all that is changed is the fact that I do not die! Christians seem not to have learned this lesson from the Brahmin tradition which holds that life is absurd as well as eternal. For Wittgenstein, 'The solution of the riddle of life in space and time (the accession of meaning to life, 'the world'), 'lies outside space and time.', in the attitude of the bearer of good and evil towards the world. It is not a problem for natural science because it is a problem that transcends the language and meaning of natural science.

It is not clear, then, exactly what Wittgenstein thinks about post-death existence. There is a definite suspicion of any traditional type of account but the conclusion of the entire matter is left undecided. It is probably most properly understood as a matter completely unassailable by our understanding and limited experience and thus, at best, nothing that could undergo worthwhile contemplation.

This draws to a close the discussion of happiness and death in the Tractatus. However, there is a provocative line of thinking put forward in a short set of *Notebooks* passages whose discussion at this time would be informative and also connect these two main concepts.

> Only a man who lives not in time but in the present is happy.[66]

This introductory passage is simply a reiteration of what we have just discussed, however it is followed by this,

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65 *Tractatus* 6.4312
66 *Notebooks* pp.74

For life in the present there is no death.[67]

This is a strange passage, in that, even if understood from all perspectives, good willing, bad willing, objective, subjective, happy, and otherwise, death seems to be inescapable. Although death 'is not an event in life', it is indeed an occurrence which ends life and 'the world' as Wittgenstein understands them. So in what sense does Wittgenstein postulate the 'non-existence' of death? The sense in which I can understand this passage is this, when one lives life in the present, void of temporal concerns or consequences, death does not exist in the respect that the thought, fear, concern over one's own death does not manifest itself in one's life. In this way, since we do not experience death in any case, death can only manifest itself in either concern, fear, worry, or anticipation. Since all these are temporal conceptions, a life in the present would be void of these considerations, hence, death not 'existing' for a life in the present.

Although there are no outwards indicators that one is living a happy life, there are outward indicators that one is not,

A man who is happy must have no fear. Not even in the face of death.[68]

Fear in the face of death is the best sign of a false, i.e. a bad, life.[69]

These comments seem to strengthen our interpretation of 'For in life...' Any fear whatsoever, for Wittgenstein, is an indication of the contemplation of past or future events which should not be a concern for one leading a happy life. Wittgenstein's reflections here are not simply of the 'armchair' variety. They stem from Wittgenstein's field experience in W.W.I, where it was very possible and sometimes likely, that he should die soon after writing them. Thus the sobriety of these statements seem to be a reflection of a very real attitude towards the world. It is not only fear that ceases to manifest itself in the 'happy' life, but attitudes with more friendly associations as well.

Whoever lives in the present lives without fear and hope.[70]

Thus, the profound inner struggle to live the happy life might manifest itself in a stoic demeanor, as Wittgenstein's often did as we see in Wittgenstein's discussions with Drury,

For a truly religious man, nothing is tragic.[71]

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67 *Notebooks* pp.74
68 *Notebooks* pp.74
69 *Notebooks* pp.74
70 *Notebooks* pp.76
71 Rhees, R. *Recollections* pp.122

as well as in a reply to his sister Hermine after she proposed that for Wittgenstein, his teaching school children was "as if someone were to use a precision instrument to open crates."

> ...he said, "You remind me of someone who is looking through a closed window and cannot explain to himself the strange movements of a passer-by. He doesn't know what kind of storm is raging outside and that this person is perhaps only with great effort keeping himself on his feet." It was then that I understood his state of mind.[72]

Our discussion of happiness and death then is complete, and in light of this, the remaining passages 6.4321, 6.44, and 6.45 should fall into place.

> How things are in the world is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher. God does not reveal himself *in* the world.[73]

The only context in which I can understand this first reference is in that of a miracle. This is the only occurrence where God would reveal himself in the world. Unlike other aspects of religious belief, this is one subject which never piqued Wittgenstein's interest, and this passage cannot be read as saying anything other than miracles, as we conceive of them, do not occur. We see his view summed up in a passage from *Culture and Value*,

> A miracle is, as it were, a gesture which God makes. As a man sits quietly and then makes an impressive gesture, God lets the world run on smoothly and then accompanies the words of a saint by a symbolic occurrence, a gesture of nature. It would be an instance if, when a saint has spoken, the trees around him bowed, as if in reverence.--Now do I believe this happens? I don't.

6.4321 describes the will's relation to the world,

> The facts all belong only to the task and not its performance.[74]

The 'what' of the world, the facts and how they stand, are the concern of the good will. The fulfillment of the truly selfless will is the calling of the agent in the world. The subject of the will's work is the world. The 'why' of the will, the will's calling, the sense of the world, is not a fact in the world, it transcends the world and explanation. Herein lies the performance of the task.

We now return to 6.45 and the last passage in part III. Wittgenstein now asks an old question against a new background.

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72 Ibid. pp.5
73 *Tractatus* 6.432
74 *Tractatus* 6.4321

Not *how* the world is, is the mystical, but *that* it is.[75]

Although not in the form of a question, we hear Schopenhauer's and Spinoza's echoes asking along "Why is there a world and not, rather, nothing?" Wittgenstein is not wondering at the world being such and such, the sky being blue, or his feet being ugly, but at the world Being, period. For Wittgenstein as for many others, this is the mystery of existence. Contrary to Schopenhauer's opinion, for Tolstoy and Wittgenstein, there is a sense, a meaning to this question.

Part IV: Silence

In 6.5, Wittgenstein can be seen to be 'coming down' from the lofts of mysticism, back to the question at hand. What can be said? As the book closes, the last propositions attempt to tie the two aspects of the work together. Wittgenstein begins to delineate exactly what can and cannot be spoken of.

> For an answer which cannot be expressed the question too cannot be expressed.
> The riddle does not exist.
> If a question can be put at all, then it can also be answered.[76]

This passage is clear if we recall Wittgenstein's two senses of 'meaning'. Words have a meaning or sense, and this meaning has strict criteria. The world also has a sense but this sense is transcendent, metaphysical. In 6.5 Wittgenstein's voice adopts the language of linguistic or propositional meaning. His point here is not new: linguistic meaning cannot point, refer, hint at, or question the meaning of the world. Propositional questioning inquires into the nature of facts. Propositions can relay nothing higher. Hence, by definition, the sense of the world transcends propositional questioning. Language can neither ask, nor answer questions about the sense of the world.

> We feel that even if all possible scientific questions be answered, the problems of life still have not been touched at all. Of course there is no question left, and just this is the answer.[77]

> The solution of the problem of life is seen in the vanishing of the problem. (Is this not the reason why men to whom after long doubting the sense of life became clear, could not say wherein this sense consisted?)[78]

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75 *Tractatus* 6.44
76 *Tractatus* 6.5
77 *Tractatus* 6.52
78 *Tractatus* 6.521

The sense of life, the good life, the happy life, only manifests itself when the willful life ceases. The willful attitude toward the world is one that inquires scientifically, that calculates means to ends. The happy life cannot be contemplated, it must be performed. There can be no ethical propositions, only ethical deeds. Scientific questions concern the domain of facts, the sense of the world becomes manifest in the exercise of the self-less will, the will for the other. And this manifestation, for Wittgenstein, is actual, it is experienced.

> There is indeed the inexpressible. This shows itself; it is the mystical.[79]

It is only in embracing the happy life that one can experience this sense of the world. Wittgenstein cannot express enough how words completely fail to describe the accession of meaning to the world of the happy person.

> My propositions are elucidatory in this way: he who understands me finally recognizes them as senseless, when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them. (He must so to speak throw away the ladder , after he has climbed up on it.)
> He must surmount these propositions; then he sees the world rightly.[80]

The surmounting of Wittgenstein's propositions consists in the realization of their vacuity, the ceasession of propositions, and the performance of the task at hand, the will for others. At this point, words become non-sensical, meaningless, superfluous. Hence, Wittgenstein's infamous call to silence.

> Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.[81]

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79 *Tractatus* 6.522
80 *Tractatus* 6.54
81 *Tractatus* 7

Chapter 3: Privacy and Moral Rule Following

Silence and Privacy

In the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* Ludwig Wittgenstein, in addition to solving the problems of philosophy[1], believed that he had finally drawn 'limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside as it were' and managed 'to put everything firmly in place by being silent about it'.[2] While his return to Cambridge in 1929 started him on a path to the renunciation of the first claim, it is not entirely clear that in his later life Wittgenstein ever renounced his early views on ethics. In fact, Wittgenstein's avoidance of philosophical discussion of ethics in his later life could be taken to be a sign of him practicing his own 'vow of silence'.[3] One reason for Wittgenstein's not renouncing his ethical conclusions of the *Tractatus* could be that their origin is somewhat different than the *Tractatus's* strictly philosophical content. If this is the case, Wittgenstein might have been legitimately avoiding 'throwing out the baby with the bath water' in maintaining his ethical conclusions during his departure from Tractarian ideas.

The conclusions of the *Tractatus*, anecdotes about Wittgenstein's life, and his own personal remarks of the time, paint a picture of Wittgenstein's ethical attitude as one marked by extreme inwardness. The rigor in which Wittgenstein sought to lead a good life was matched only by the rigor in which he sought to distance himself from any worldly influences. This 'apartness' manifested itself in many forms, from literal physical apartness in his visits to his cabin hermitage in Norway, to a form of emotional apartness in his effort to 'renounce the happenings of the world', giving away his immense fortune, abandoning his philosophical career, and turning his back on long time friends[4]. The silence of the *Tractatus,* apart from putting everything in its place, designates that place to be, in Wittgenstein's case, inward. Wittgenstein's ethical and spiritual life was essentially private.

Although Wittgenstein's attitude towards ethics seems far more personal than philosophical, I maintain that it does not escape the far reaching criticisms of his thoughts which form the foundation of the *Philosophical Investigations.* The skeptical discussion of private rule following has had far reaching

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1 "On the other hand the *truth* of the thoughts communicated here seem to me unassailable and definitive. I am, therefore, of the opinion that the problems have in essentials been finally solved". (*Tractatus,* preface.)

2 Letter from Wittgenstein to Von Flicker found in Luckhardt, pp.82

3 In *Wittgenstein on Ethics and Religious Belief*, Cyril Barrett advances this point. It is to a certain extent questioned by John Churchill in *Wonder and the End of Explaination: Wittgenstein and Religious Sensibility* in Philosophical Investigations April 1994. Neither author is entirely convincing, and I am not sure a convincing argument could even be made for either side; however, this is not a real concern here as the point of my paper in no way hinges on this interpretation of Wittgenstein's life 'being the case' or not.

4 "He became for a time very religious, so much so that he began to consider me too wicked to associate with." Russell in *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell* pp.139

implications in the philosophies of language, mathematics, and mind. In this paper I will consider the *Tractatus's* call for silence about ethics in light of Wittgenstein's latter discussion of following a rule.

For a practical example of another private ethical life I will turn to fiction. Tolstoy's novella *Father Sergius* will serve as a demonstration of the failure of private rule following in terms of a moral life. A short summary of the story will serve as a precise demonstration of the conscious effort of Sergius, a hermit, to live a private moral life and the ultimate failure of his attempt.

There is one main point in this paper that will be emphasized in several different ways. It is this: an ethical/moral life instituted is a life of following ethical or moral rules. One can no more follow a moral rule privately than one can follow any other rule, linguistic, mathematical, etc. Wittgenstein shows in *Philosophical Investigations* that one can never be certain that any rule is being followed in private because 'every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule'. All ethical/moral lives, then, which embody themselves by following ethical/moral rules, must have public dimensions. Although, prima facie, this may seem inevitable, Wittgenstein's and Sergius's lives will show that even those with the purest of intentions can fall prey to this sort of ethical solipsism.

Although some argument could be made that Wittgenstein's ethical life was a manifestation of a form of Tractarian existential mysticism, it is not my intention in this paper to psychologize Wittgenstein. As titillating as the few remarks which exist about his early life may be, I do not believe they form an appropriate basis to construct any sort of factual picture of Wittgenstein's true nature. Even if we knew more of Wittgenstein's personal torments, I would still hesitate to draw conclusions about any one individual's life. In Wittgenstein's case, any effort of this nature could only serve as a disservice in trivializing such an utterly complex life. I wish the thrust of my criticism in this paper to be seen as a challenge to any form of private ethical life. The biographical information about Wittgenstein is only intended to show how one such philosophy can be seen as having become manifest in one person's life, and more importantly, how this attitude influenced the ethical conclusions of the *Tractatus*. Tractarian silence is only one possible example of a private ethical life.

Fear and Safety

As mentioned in the introductory paragraphs of this paper and discussed at length in the chapter entitled *Genealogy of Silence*, Wittgenstein's thoughts on ethics can be seen to have a distinct lineage from his thoughts on logic and language in the *Tractatus*. I maintain that this is a good part of the reason they survive, at least in part, the ideological refitting that Wittgenstein underwent upon his return to Cambridge. It will be useful, then, to examine some biographical elements in Wittgenstein's life to show how the ethical conclusions of the *Tractatus* arose as well as the fundamental role they play in Wittgenstein's attitude towards ethics.

Two emotional phenomena that served as central topics for Wittgenstein's reflections on his own life were fear and safety. In notes written during W.W.I, Wittgenstein seems preoccupied by the experience of fear. Strangely enough, it is not the actual manifestation of the circumstances which cause fear, but the power this fear has to affect even him.

> In constant danger of my life. By the grace of God the night went well. From time to time I despair. This is the fault of a wrong view of life...[5]

> Only one thing is needed: to be able to contemplate whatever happens to one; *collect oneself.* God help me.[6]

> Only don't lose yourself!!! Collect yourself![7]

We see in these early remarks the idea that not having complete composure and control over oneself can be seen as an ethical failure of sorts; Wittgenstein's one hope is not to survive or be saved, but to be able to 'collect himself'. Indeed in the *Notebooks* we see Wittgenstein submit altogether that this lack of composure is a sign of wrong living.

> Fear in the face of death is the best sign of a false, i.e. a bad, life.[8]

Now this fear, as well as these feelings about it, might not be seen to paint an accurate portrayal of Wittgenstein's attitude before and after the war. At the time Wittgenstein jotted them down he was under constant fire and could have been killed at any time. Situations like this do indeed tend to alter one's perspective on life. However, Wittgenstein's recollections of his youth tend to reinforce the claim that fear was always an eminent source of concern and frustration for him.

> He then went on to tell me that as a child he had suffered greatly from morbid fears. In the lavatory of his home some plaster had fallen from the wall and he always saw this pattern as a duck, but it terrified him": it had the appearance for him of those monsters that Bosch painted in his 'Temptations of Saint Anthony'. Even when he was a student at Manchester he suffered at times from morbid fears. To get from his bedroom to his sitting room he had to cross over a landing, and sometimes he found himself dreading making this crossing. We were at that time walking quite briskly, but he suddenly stopped still and looked at me very seriously. "You will think I am crazy, you will think I have gone

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5 Rhees, R. *Recollections* pp.215
6 ibid. pp.216
7 ibid.
8 *Notebooks*, pp.75

> mad, when I tell you that only religious feelings are a cure for such fears."..."I am not talking about superstition but about real religious feeling."[9]

Wittgenstein's confession here to Drury in important in two ways. First, it demonstrates Wittgenstein's profound disturbance at his 'morbid' fears, and second, it shows that Wittgenstein also finds a means of emancipation from these fears in the form of 'real religious feeling'. It is this religious feeling that forms the basis of the second emotional phenomenon we are concerned with.

In his memoir of Wittgenstein, Norman Malcom describes Wittgenstein's recollection of the exact moment he realized the possibility and the meaning of this 'real religious feeling'.

> In Vienna he saw a play that was a mediocre drama, but in it one of the characters expressed the thought that no matter what happened in the world, nothing bad could happen to *him--he* was independent of fate and circumstances. Wittgenstein was struck by this stoic thought; for the first time he saw the possibility of religion....But Wittgenstein did once say that he thought that he could understand the conception of God, insofar as it is involved in one's awareness of one's own sin and guilt.[10]

It is this feeling that Wittgenstein later characterized as the feeling of 'absolute safety'[11] in which he found his salvation from the fears that plagued his youth. Wittgenstein differs slightly from the character in the play, however, in that he does not see this attitude making him independent of the world, indeed, it is in his renunciation of the influence of the world that this feeling becomes manifest. The turn into himself relinquished him from the fear that affected him so profoundly.

This renunciation not only includes the material world, i.e. money, possessions, but the inter-personal world as well. It is a turn to privacy in the truest sense.

> ...Don't be dependent on the external world and then you need have no fear of what happens in it.... It is x easier to be independent of things than to be independent of human beings. But one must be able to do this as well.[12]

This is perhaps the clearest indication of Wittgenstein's commitment to living a life in search of total safety at the expense of total exclusion from the influence

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9 Rhees, R. *Recollections* pp.116
10 Malcom, N. *A Memoir* pp.58-9
11 In *Lecture on Ethics*
12 Rhees, R. *Recollections* pp.216

of things and people. This particularly characteristic attitude seems to survive long after the philosophy of the *Tractatus* has been put aside. His biographer Ray Monk describes how this attitude is manifest in terms of Wittgenstein's personal relationships throughout his entire life,

> Wittgenstein's infatuation with Kirk--entirely unspoken, unacknowledged and unreciprocated as it was--exemplified in its purest form a feature that had characterized his earlier loves for Pinsent and for Marguerite; namely, a certain indifference to the feelings of the other person. That neither Pinsent nor Marguerite--and certainly not Kirk--were in love with him seemed not to affect his love for them. Indeed, it perhaps made his love easier to give, for the relationship could be conducted safely, in the splendid isolation of his own feelings. The philosophical solipsism to which he had one time been attracted, and against which much of his later work is addressed(he characterized his later work as an attempt to show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle), has its parallel in the emotional solipsism in which his romantic attachments were conducted.[13]

Monk, too, sees the Tractarian residue of solipsism in Wittgenstein's later life as well as in Wittgenstein's seeming lack of realization that this attitude was anything out of the normal. Wittgenstein, having been proud of never having read Aristotle, does not seem to contemplate the down side of purposefully living a life as never to be effected or influenced by other people. On the contrary, especially in religious matters, Wittgenstein emphasized the importance of living a private spiritual life.

> "Oh, don't depend on circumstances. Make sure your religion is a matter between you and God only."[14]

In light of the consolation Wittgenstein found in his turn into himself, the realization of the feeling of invulnerability, the refuge from fear, it is easy to see how a passage like 7.0 of the Tractatus can manifest itself.

> Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.[15]

Literally taken, 7.0 is a call for silence in matters of ethics. I prefer to think of it more as a comment on the ineffable nature and foundation of ethics. However it is understood, Wittgenstein is clear in so far as he places ethics strictly in the domain of the self. It is a private experience which by definition cannot be expressed.

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13 Monk, R. *Duty of Genius* pp.428
14 Rhees, R. *Recollections* pp.117
15 Tractatus, 7

By no means does the private nature of ethics diminish the necessity for one to pursue an ethical life with according rigor, as commentary from Wittgenstein's friend of the time, Paul Engelmann, maintains,

> The view of the *Tractatus* in this respect can be summed up briefly by saying: ethical propositions do not exist; ethical action does exist.[16]
>
> The practical result of this view of the impossibility of speaking about values is the opposite of what might be expected from a cursory consideration of the problem. Conditioned by the interpretations of liberal theologians and philosophers who seek to mediate between religion and science by pouring water into the wine until nothing but water remains, we should guess that the new view, saying that the higher values should not even be talked about, must lead to an ethical--religious nihilism, saying that therefore what ethics bids us to do need no longer be done. But Wittgenstein implies that it ought to be done, and done most rigorously, in full measure, without any watering down, even though the authority of theories now recognized as untenable can no longer be invoked as justification.[17]

There seems to be no question about Wittgenstein's commitment to pursuing an ethical life,

> This led to an attitude to life that comes nearest perhaps to that sought by Tolstoy: an ethical totalitarianism in all questions, a single-minded and painful preservation of the purity of the uncompromising demands of ethics, in agonizing awareness of one's own permanent failure to measure up to them. This is the demand Wittgenstein makes on himself. But even the example of a life lived in this way was sometimes apt to confuse weaker spirits, which, considered in terms of ethics, was their fault, not his.[18]

It is also clear, however, that this pursuit was strictly personal. It was a pursuit consisting of an effort first, to exclude all influences of the outside world, and second, to proceed in it unencumbered by fear, guilt, or love.

For the purpose of this paper, we see Wittgenstein wearing two hats. The first is that of a person attempting, with great rigor, to live a moral life while going to great lengths to distance himself from the influences of the world, both material and personal. The second, is that of a philosophical advocate of both silence in matters of ethics and the existential private nature of a moral life. For the purposes of this paper it is only the second picture of Wittgenstein that remains a concern to us. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this paper was

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16 Engelmann, P. *Letters* pp.110
17 Engelmann, P. *Letters* pp.109
18 Engelmann. *Letters* pp.109

not to perform psychoanalysis on Wittgenstein, but simply to use him as an example of one who attempts to lead a moral life but in an exclusively private domain. The second picture, Wittgenstein seen as an advocate of a private moral life through his call for silence at the end of the *Tractatus*, can now become the focus of a particular philosophical criticism which has been advanced by none other that Wittgenstein himself.

To Follow a Rule

This discussion of rules should begin with an answer to an obvious question. What does ethics have to do with rules? Prima facie, ethics seems solely to deal with different conceptions of the 'good life'. I maintain, however, that ethics or morality manifests itself in the behavior of any particular individual who chooses to live a moral life. Ethical behavior is, then, primarily behavior which is dictated by certain moral precepts, rules if you will. There are two senses in which ethical imperatives can be considered rules. There are rules as one might encounter them in a Kantian or rule utilitarian perspective, 'do not lie', 'do not steal', etc. These rules are straighforeward in the sense that they simply advocate or prohibit certain behaviours. The second sense in which ones ethical behaviour can be considered rule following is when the subject's conception of the 'good life' becomes manifest in adopting an ethical 'attitude' towards the world. The subject who chose to pursue such a life might not be concerned with how particular rules fit particular situations, but how best to perceive the world as a whole via some ethical attitude, i.e. one of compassion, humility, obedience, etc.[19] So for the purposes of this paper, then, an ethical agent will primarily be considered an ethical rule follower. Although this is perhaps not the ideal description of an ethical agent, rule following is an essential and necessary enough function of being an ethical agent that this description will suffice.

The discussion in this section will revolve around the possibility of following a rule privately. The previous section dealt with Wittgenstein as both an agent who attempts to lead a private moral life and as a philosopher who can be seen as advocating that the realm of the ethical, i.e., the moral life, be pursued inwardly: recall the call for silence in Tractatus 7.0. Wittgenstein's work, of course, is only one example of a private ethical life. In philosophy we see other ethical theories which could be considered as advocating a certain

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19 This type of rule following is perhaps the more difficult of the two for two reasons. First, subjectively, it is not as straightforeward as simply following a rule like 'do not steal', on reflection its applications are far less concrete. "Did I steal that pen?" "Did I behave compassionately?" Second, the means of verification or errancy that the particular rule is being followed is clearer and more likely to be brought to one's attention in the first case. "Excuse me, you seem to have stolen my pen." is more likely to be heard in daily life than "Excuse me, you seem to have failed to treat me with uncompromising compassion."

element of privacy in determining behavior and in deliberating the correctness of actions, Existentialism comes to mind. Any individual who intentionally or not might live outside (physically or influencially) of any form of community can also be considered, to greater or lesser degrees, to be following rules privately.[20]

In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein launches into a discussion which addresses the nature of rules and rule following. In contemporary philosophical discussion of these passages, a debate is raging concerning Wittgenstein's actual intention in these passages. Saul Kripke, in his 1982 book *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, begins the debate with his interpretation of Wittgenstein's attack on the notion of following a rule privately. Kripke claims that the basis of Wittgenstein's famous 'private language argument' lies in Wittgenstein's discussion of rule following found in the sections which immediately precede the discussion of the possibility of a private language. Kripke maintains that Wittgenstein is responsible for inventing an innovative new skepticism which applies to any individual's attempt to interpret a rule. Kripke holds that it is impossible for an individual to know he or she is following a rule for, according to Wittgenstein, "no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule."[21] Kripke takes Wittgenstein's example of the student counting to demonstrate this skeptical problem. A student counts a series of numbers following the rule +2. Upon reaching 1000, he continues on 1004, 1008, 1012... When reproached, the student fails to see the mistake as his master sees it. His answer, "I thought that's how I was meant to do it!" Kripke sees this example as demonstrating the skeptical challenge. It is impossible for any individual to follow a rule privately, for in order to be sure one is following the rule one requires verification from an objective observer. The skeptical challenge arises when one attempts to verify by reflecting on some internal criteria the accordance of behaviour with a rule. Wittgenstein compares this to someone 'buy[ing] several copies of the morning paper to assure himself that what was said was true."[22]

In their 1984 book *Skepticism, Rules, and Language*, G. Baker and P.M.S. Hacker strongly criticize both Kripke's exegesis of Wittgenstein as well as his philosophical discussion of rule following. The first criticism is misplaced for the most part, Kripke states clearly in the introduction to his book that his was an attempt to draw out a lucid argument from Wittgenstein, not to perform careful exegesis. The second criticism, however, is more accurate. Baker and Hacker suggest that Kripke's account of Wittgenstein is based on Wittgenstein holding a view of the nature of rules that he completely dismisses in his discussion. Kripke's account is based on the view that to follow a rule involves an internal interpretation of the rule. Baker and Hacker point out that Wittgenstein abandons this picture and proposes a new one where to follow a rule is actually

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20 Keeping in mind this is not the only philosophical definition of what it is to follow a rule 'privately', it will remain the one we are soley concerned with.

21 *Investigations*, §201

22 *Investigations*, §265

an internalized practice or behaviour. They point to §201 for evidence of this change in opinion. "What this shews is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation..." Hence, to follow a linguistic or mathematical rule is not to interpret the rule, but to have internalized the process of following the rule so it becomes no longer an interpretation, but a behaviour.

In terms of the private language account, I believe Baker and Hacker win the day. My point in this section, however, will be skeptical, much closer to the one Kripke describes. I believe my account also avoids Baker and Hacker's criticism of Kripke by substituting ethical rule following for linguistic rule following. Unlike linguistic rule following, I do not believe ethical rule following is best interpreted as an internalized form of behaviour. In the first place, the situations where ethical rules are called into play are seldom ever the same. In this sense, the applications of the rules of ethical behaviour can be considered to be much more diverse than linguistic behaviour. Secondly, unlike the rules involved with speaking a language, an individual can choose whether or not he or she will follow ethical rules. These rules can be set aside, forgotten, changed, adopted, etc. In this respect, they are less likely to be the type of rule that could be considered a behaviour or practice. Hence, Kripke's skeptical point is best understood in this ethical context. Ethical rules are the type of rules which call for the individual follower's interpretation but whose verification of accordance must come from outside.

Hence, the skeptical challenge to private rule following applies specifically to the type of ethical rules I have described.

> And to *think* one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately': otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it.[23]

The main philosophical point of the paper is this: it is impossible to know for certain one is following an ethical rule privately because every action or interpretation can be made out by oneself to accord with the rule. In order to know one is following an ethical rule, there must be verification from one's own community of rule followers. If this verification is not present, one can never be certain an action or, more importantly, an attitude is in accord with a rule. Thus the advocacy of a private ethical life is the advocacy of a life that is potentially philosophically and morally suspect.

Father Sergius

I do not intend the point of this paper to be understood in a strictly philosophical sense. Perhaps, more than most, this philosophical point has far reaching personal implications. I will attempt to make this point clearer first by inventing an example suited to the point and then showing how this point manifests itself in fiction, particularly Tolstoy's novella *Father Sergius*.

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[23] *Investigations*, §202

Professor X teaches at an old British university where it is tradition for professors to dine together at the head table while the students dine in long rows below them. X has recently been concerned with his own behaviour and has taken measures to improve himself by concentrating on living a humble and honest life. X had dined many times at the head table with his fellow professors and often enjoyed the randy conversation as well as the gossip and quarreling that accompanies academic life. After X's change in attitude, he takes it upon himself to avoid the temptations of engaging himself with all the sordid goings on of the head table. His effort to live modestly and humbly dictated that he avoid all decadent and scandalous behaviour. X begins dining, not with the professors, but with the students at the foot of the head table. Although this is not his intention, his action draws the attention of students and professors alike. Day after day, X is the topic of conversation both at the head table and on the floor. X's fellow professors start to treat him poorly as a result of his apparent self righteousness. X's students, along with other students begin to revere X and praise him for abandoning the head table. As time passes, X begins to bear a grudge against his peers for their poor behaviour towards him. These bad feelings are, however, compensated for by the admiration and accolades heaped upon him from the student body. Secretly, X enjoys his new found status in the eyes of his students. X now refuses all invitations to sit at the head table as a matter of principle, turning down opportunities to dine with invited quests and alike. This carries on until one day, one of X's old friends visits him. After the second day of his visit, upon seeing all that is happening, X's friend takes him aside. The friend tells X that despite his best intentions, his behaviour has ceased to be strictly for the benefit of his own moral well being. Where first he avoided the head table to better himself, now he avoids it to spite his colleagues and win the approval of his students. X, at once, sees that this is the case and realizes exactly to what extent he has erred. He does his best to make amends and correct the situation.

It is important to note that during the entire time he sits away from the table, X believes his only intentions are to avoid the poor behaviour that occurs there. It is only when his friend notes that his behaviour suggests otherwise, he realizes he has ceased to follow the rules he had set out for himself. In a sense, X's failure to follow the rule could be best described as self deception, for to himself, all his behaviour seems to be in accord with the new rules that govern his life.

My second example of a failure to follow ethical rules privately is found in Tolstoy's story *Father Sergius*. The story is of a Russian aristocrat and military officer who abandons his budding military career and social status after he discovers his fiancée is a former lover of the Czar. Sergius first enters a monastery to show his disregard for all he held dear in his former life but is slowly transformed into a pious monk whose standard of monastic excellence is unequaled. All throughout Sergius's life he constantly battles his pride and it, more that all other things, is responsible for his high standard of personal excellence. In the monastery, Sergius commits himself to the subjugation of his

worldly pride and continually performs acts of great humility in order to be sure his life is lived for God and not himself.

Sergius's life is untroubled until his transfer to a second monastery in his seventh year as a monk. His new setting is filled with the worldly temptations Sergius thought he had left in his life of nobility, but his most difficult challenge comes to him in the form of his new abbot. Sergius considers his new abbot to be "a worldly man, clever in worldly ways, who was making a career for himself within the church". However he tried, Sergius could not come to respect his new superior and his difficulties come to a head when the superior attempts to embarrass Sergius by parading him in front of a former military colleague. Sergius's pride finally overcomes him and he begs the abbot to be excused while at the same time chastising the abbot for exposing him to temptation in a house of God. Sergius can see no resolution to his new situation so he writes a letter to his superior asking for his council.

> He wrote that he felt his weakness, and the impossibility of struggling alone against his temptation without his help. He did penance for his sin of pride. The next post brought him a letter from his superior, who wrote that the sole cause of all his troubles was pride. The old man explained to him that his fits of anger were due to the fact that in refusing all clerical honour he humiliated himself not for the sake of God, but for the sake of his pride--merely for the sake of saying to himself:"Now, am I not a splendid fellow not to desire anything?" That is why he could not tolerate the abbot's action. "I have renounced everything for the glory of God, and here I am exhibited like a wild beast!" "If you would give up vanity for God's glory you would be able to bear it", wrote the old man,; "worldly pride is not dead in you. I have thought often of you, Sergius, my son. I have prayed also, and this is God's message with regard to you: Go on as you are, and submit."[24]

The superior's letter shows Sergius something that he could not see for himself, that he is still filled with pride and despite his best intentions, it is influencing his attitude towards the world. Although the letter brings Sergius into more settled waters, his wish to leave the monastery is granted and Sergius finds himself occupying the cell and position of a recently deceased hermit.

Sergius quickly adapts to the life of a hermit, although he has no contact with his superior, he leads an ascetic life of prayer and abstinence. His will power during this time is best documented in his second when a young divorcée travels to Sergius's hut in order to seduce him. During the attempt, Sergius overcomes temptation by chopping off one of his fingers with a hatchet. In his next eight years, Sergius gains great fame throughout the land as a pious hermit who has at times the power to heal. Though his fame becomes more widespread, in his solitude Sergius begins to question the piety of his life.

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24 *Sergius*, pp.54-5

Although his intentions remain of the most pure nature, his way of life comes into question.

> The state of things had begun after healing of the boy of fourteen. Since that time Sergius felt that each passing month, each week and each day, his inner life had somehow been destroyed and a merely external life had been substituted for it. It was as if he had been turned inside out.
> Sergius saw that he was a means of attracting visitors and patrons to the monastery, and that, therefore, the authorities of the monastery tried to arrange matters in such a way that he might be profitable to them....
> But the more he gave himself up to such an existence the more he felt his inner life transformed into an external one. He felt the fount of living water drying up within him, and that everything he did now was performed more and more for man and less for God.[25]

The longer Sergius lives in isolation, the more he feels that his life, somehow, is lacking a spiritual purity it once had. Having no outside council, he continues on with his life of receiving pilgrims and praying for the sick, thinking this was his only course of action. Many times he is tempted to leave but always remains because although he is constantly troubled by the state of his inner life, he also enjoys the admiration and gratitude of the peasants who travel to see him.

Sergius reaches the lowest point of his life some time later when he succumbs to temptation and sleeps with a young girl who is brought to him to be healed. Overcome by guilt and the horror of his actions, Sergius flees the monastery. That night Sergius is tempted by thoughts of suicide as his faith falls away from him. He manages to fall asleep in this time of anguish and in a dream an angel tells him to search out a woman who he had been aquatinted with long ago.

> "I must end it all. There is no God. How can I do it? Throw myself in! I can swim; I should not drown. Hang myself? Yes; just with this belt, to a branch." This seemed so feasible and so easy that he wanted to pray, as he always did in moments of distress. But there was none to pray to. God was not....
> At last he fell asleep, and in his dream he saw an angel, who came to him and said,--"Go to Pashinka. Find out what you have to do, and what your sin is, and what is your way to salvation."[26]

Sergius travels for days to locate Pashinka and discovers her in a small town living an extremely meager life, supporting her entire family. Pashinka welcomes Sergius and although she has very little, offers him food and some money. He tells her that he has specifically sought her out and begins to ask her questions about her life in an attempt to discover what it is she has to teach him.

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25 *Sergius*, pp.78
26 *Sergius*, pp.97

> "Well Pashinka, and what about your attitude to the church." "Oh, don't speak of it! I'm so bad that way. I have neglected it so! When the children have to go, I fast and go to communion with them, but for the rest of the time I often do not go for a month. I just send them." "And why don't you go?" Well, to tell the truth"--she blushed"I'm ashamed for Masha's sake and the children's to go in my old clothes. And I haven't anything else. Besides, I'm just lazy." "And do you pray at home?" "I do; but it's a mechanical sort of praying. I know it's wrong. But I have no real religious feeling. I only know I'm wicked--that's all."[27]

It was in Pashinka's lack of pride and life of utter humility that Sergius found his lesson.

> "That was the meaning of my vision. Pashinka is what I should have been, and was not. I lived for man, on the pretext of living for God; and she lives for God, imagining she lives for man! Yes; one good deed--a cup of cold water given without expectation of reward--is worth far more that all the benefits I thought I was bestowing on the world. But was there not, after all, one grain of desire to serve God?" he asked himself. And the answer came: "Yes there was; but it was so soiled, so overgrown with desire for the world's praise. No; there is no God for the man who lives for the praise of the world. I must now seek *Him*."[28]

Sergius realizes that in his time alone, he lost sight of what he was living for. The less he remained in contact with his superiors, the less he begged the advice of others, the more he was lost inside himself and the easier it was for his intentions to become clouded and lost. His will to do good remained but he was, in a sense, blind to his own actions and decisions.

Sergius's early life is characterized by an overwhelming desire to do good and excel in his monastic existence. His actions are surveyed by the members of his community and upon his appeal to them, they guide him from the perspective of how his life appears to them. When Sergius becomes a hermit, he enters into the realm of privacy. His contact with his superiors and his community ceases and he is left to his own as to how he lives, prays, thinks, and feels. Sergius never loses the will to do good but in his own mind loses sight of his goals and desires. For Sergius, they are replaced by the pursuit of the admiration and praise of men. It is not until his confession to Pashinka and her demonstration of a good life that Sergius realizes how his good will had gone astray and how lost he was inside himself.

Tolstoy demonstrates the danger of a private ethical life in straying from the usual style of a moral tale. Sergius is not a 'bad' person who is redeemed in

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27 *Sergius*, pp.107
28 *Sergius*, pp.109

the conclusion of the story. Throughout the story, Sergius's intentions, as they are known to him, are always pious and noble. It was always his intention to follow the rules of a monastic, selfless life. His becoming lost in himself, his self deception is his failure but not in the typical respect. It was not an ethical failure, but a failure to recognize an element of his own nature, of human nature in general.

Sergius's life is an extreme example of the inability to privately follow a moral rule. Both the privacy of his life and the rigor we see in his pursuit of a moral life are uncommon. I do not believe circumstances must be this extreme for skepticism to enter into ones pursuit of a moral life. The phrase 'blinded by pride' might be an apt description of a familiar occurrence of one's realization of an ethical failing only upon its being straight-forwardly pointed out.

The summary of this chapter is a simple one, as has the point been all along. A moral life is a life which manifests itself in following certain moral rules. There can be no certainty that we are following moral rules unless there is some appeal to a member of our community, or our actual community of moral rule followers. One can never be certain that one is following a moral rule if there is no objective observer to appeal to. Therefore, any ethical theory which advocates the privacy of moral life is philosophically suspect. We need to appeal to a community of fellow rule followers to assure that we live life without moral 'blind spots' if it is our intention to live moral lives at all.

This point must also be considered 'meta-ethical' for it transcends the limits of particular any particular ethical theory. Its application must be considered in any ethical behaviour that can be considered a form of moral rule following. This point demonstrates that the notion of living a 'good life' must involve more that simply a set of rules and a good will. Any accordance with a 'good life' must necessarily be verified from a perspective outside of the ethical subjects. This involves life lived with some appeal to an ethical community. In the lives of professor X, Sergius, and perhaps Wittgenstein, we see the hidden danger of becoming lost in oneself. We also see that the solution to the problem, however hard we search, does not lie inside us.

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